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Beirut court studies deputies' petition

BEIRUT (R) — Beirut's constitutional court met on Saturday to discuss a secret report on a petition lodged by opposition parliamentary deputies to cancel a controversial election law. The 10-member constitutional council went into session behind closed doors to discuss the report submitted by a special reporter it appointed during its first session last Tuesday. Journalists were ordered to leave the meeting. The court had declared the petition legal in form and said it would meet again to discuss its basis in light of the recommendation by the special unnamed reporter. The petition, signed by 10 deputies — six Christians and four Muslim leftists — to cancel the law passed by parliament last month — argues the law violates the constitutional principle of equality for all citizens. If the court rules against the law, parliamentary elections due to begin on August 18 would be cancelled.

Danish defence chief dies in crash

COPENHAGEN (R) — Denmark's defence chief was among nine people killed when a Royal Danish Air Force plane crashed on Saturday as it came in to land in poor visibility in the Faroe Islands, a defence spokesman said. The plane hit a cliffside as it approached Vagar airstrip on the westernmost of the Faroe Islands in the North Atlantic. It was bringing a military delegation back from an official visit to Greenland and Iceland. The defence chief, Admiral Hans Joergen Garde, 57, took over Denmark's highest military post last April. The other victims were four crew, Garde's wife and three officers, the spokesman told Reuters. Fire engulfed the wreckage of the U.S.-built two-engined Gulfstream III, which is normally used to transpon royalty and military leaders. Police said there was no sign of any survivors. The aircraft's burning wreckage was scattered over a cliff face about 1.5 kilometres from the airport.

King, Assad hold 'very positive' talks

HM describes Damascus summit as opportunity for reconciliation and discussion of all issues

King says he is not carrying any Syrian message for Netanyahu

By Mervat Suwadeh
with agency dispatches

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday described as very successful talks he held in Damascus with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and said Syria was committed to Middle East peace.

Talking to reporters upon his return home from the Syrian capital after the talks, the King also said the visit was an "opportunity for reconciliation and openness on many issues, in fact all issues," between Jordan and Syria. It was the King's first visit to Syria after Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in October 1994 but his second meeting with President Assad since then. The two leaders met on the fringes of the Arab summit held in Cairo in June.

"It was a successful visit with all the meaning of the word," the King said

The King said his talks with the Syrian president dealt with the peace process, bilateral ties and inter-Arab relations. He said the meeting was "very positive" and that he was "very comfortable" with the visit.

The King's visit to Syria was widely seen as a Jordanian effort to break the stalemate in Syrian-Israeli negotiations, but the King said he did not carry "any message" from the Syrian president to Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, who is due here on Monday.

"President Assad did not give me any message to pass on to the Israeli prime minister. But he knows that when he wants I am willing to serve the cause of comprehensive and just peace," the King said.

He also declined to unveil Syria's "response" to Israel's "Lebanon-first" option which Damascus has publicly refused.

"We discussed all issues but I cannot talk now and I do not think I have the right to speak about this issue," he said.

However, the King said he felt that President Assad remained committed to peace.

"I gave him my first impression regarding the recent changes and again, I felt his commitment to a just, comprehensive and fair peace," the King said when asked if he felt any change in Syria's peace position after the victory of Mr. Netanyahu in May elections.

King Hussein was accompanied during the visit by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Minister of Information Marwan Muasher and Water Minister Samir Kawar. Syrian Vice-presidents Abdul Halim Khaddam and Zuheir Masharka also took part in the talks.

Under Mr. Netanyahu's "Lebanon-first" option Israel and Syria would break the six-month deadlock in their peace negotiations by agreeing on a settlement in Lebanon where both countries have troops. Mr. Netanyahu is expected to raise his proposal when he meets with King Hussein this week during his first visit to the Kingdom since he took office in June, a Jordanian official said.

Reports from Tel Aviv suggested Friday that Mr. Netanyahu requested King Hussein to mediate with the Syrians when the two leaders met secretly in London. But the Royal Court here denied that such a meeting took place.

Israeli army radio said late Thursday that Mr. Netanyahu had met the King in London last week but gave no other details.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Mr. Netanyahu had left Israel last Friday for an unknown destination.

Among other issues, the King discussed with President Assad attempted terrorist attacks against Jordan by Syrian-based groups. The King had given Mr. Assad during the Arab summit in Cairo a file that included details of 36 foiled attempts organised by Syrian-based groups against Jordan.

Asked whether the two countries would take "practical measures" to prevent similar attempts the King said: "We discussed all issues, and there is coordination between the two countries on all levels and in various fields."

Jordanian officials said recently that Syria had taken "positive steps" by arresting about 10 suspects in the plots against Jordan.

In Damascus, a spokesman for President Assad said the three-hour meeting with the King focused on "obstacles created by the Israeli government" to a comprehensive Middle East peace agreement.

Official Syrian radio on Saturday again rejected Mr. Netanyahu's "Lebanon-first" proposal, saying it was an attempt to "sow divisions between Syria and Lebanon."

Syrian political sources quoted by AFP said that President Assad wants a "clear Israeli commitment" to withdraw from the Golan Heights, which the Jewish state seized from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war.

An official Syrian daily warned Saturday that Israel had issued a "declaration of war on the peace process" with its decision to ease restrictions on expanding existing Jewish settlements.

"It sabotages all international efforts and violates the U.N. resolutions and the principle of land-for-peace," Tishrin said.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad embraces His Majesty King Hussein upon the Monarch's arrival at Damascus airport for a brief working visit on Saturday (Reuters photo)

Perry: U.S. forces in Gulf are alert against 'imminent' attack

U.S. official hints at Iranian role in Dhahran bombing, asserts militants wants American forces out of region

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. forces in the Gulf are on the highest alert and commanders there have been instructed to prepare for an "imminent" terrorist attack, Defence Secretary William Perry said Saturday.

Mr. Perry said there was "a flood of intelligence, no one of which is clearly indicative of a specific attack at a specific place, but in the aggregate has caused us to raise our threat level in Saudi Arabia to the highest possible threat level."

"That threat level translates to an attack is imminent. That is the instruction under which all of our forces commanders there operate under: to prepare for an imminent terrorist attack," Mr. Perry told reporters.

Mr. Perry, who met with reporters about his trip this week to the Gulf, backed away from a statement Friday in which he suggested that a Saudi investigation would find an "international connection," possibly Iran, was behind a terrorist bombing in Dhahran that killed 19 Americans.

Mr. Perry said he did not know what the Saudi investigators would conclude, and based his expectation of an international connection on the complexity of the bombing and the terrorists' use of military explosives and detonators.

Mr. Perry told reporters he was only quoting Iran's own statements when he said on Friday that Iran was a leading candidate for international terrorism against the United States, adding: "to tie it to any imminent action is just not warranted at all."

When asked if his Friday comments on Iran, coupled with a new report that Iran had terrorist training camps, meant the United States might strike, Mr. Perry said that was a classic case of adding two and two and getting twenty two.

Saying he welcomed a chance to clarify his Friday comments, Mr. Perry said he only repeated Iran's own threat to support terrorism against U.S. forces and repeated his conclusion that the sophistication of the Saudi bombing indicated "an international terrorist connection."

Mr. Perry said he did not know if Saudi Arabia would shortly announce its findings on the June 25 truck bombing and said that during his recent trip there: "I learned nothing new about who was responsible for the bombing."

He said U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia are on higher alert.

PNA court jails three policemen for torture death of prisoner

Hamas urges increased attacks

NABLUS (Agencies) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) on Saturday jailed three policemen for torturing a prisoner to death and formed a committee to look into the killing of a demonstrator in the West Bank.

However, the militant Hamas organisation called for an uprising against the PNA and called for attacks on "Zionist targets" to avenge the two deaths.

A Jericho military court found three PNA police officers guilty of torturing to death 26-year-old Mahmoud Jemayel in a Nablus jail.

Jemayel died last Wednesday night after he was tortured by naval police. Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who ordered the trial in an attempt to sooth growing tensions in the West Bank, said Jemayel would be considered a Palestinian "martyr" — a term usually given to those killed by Israeli repression.

The Jericho court sentenced Captain Abdul Hakim Hijjo an Lieutenant Omar Kaddoumi to 15 years plus hard labour for the killing. Sergeant Ahmad Biddo received a 10-year jail term plus hard labour.

Palestinian human rights activists have denounced the trial, which lasted for about two hours, as a mockery.

"The Palestinian Authority is trying to escape responsibility for its actions by holding speedy trials," said human rights activist Khader Shqeirat. Tensions rose in the West Bank after Jemayel's death and on Friday Palestinian police shot dead a demonstrator during clashes at a prison in the town of Tulkarem.

(Continued on page 7)

Aideed's faction spurns Ali Mahdi's peace offer

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Followers of the late Somali faction leader Mohammad Farah Aideed on Saturday spurned an offer of peace talks from his arch-enemy.

"Interior minister" Mohammad Kanyare Afrah said a successor to Aideed, declared president of Somalia by supporters in June last year, would be chosen within seven days of his death by his council of ministers and his alliance's leadership council.

"We will continue the policies of the interim government ...We will stand as he stood," Mr. Kanyare told Reuters at his residence in war-battered and sandswept southern Mogadishu.

"If anyone wants to talk to us as a government we will talk to them as faction leaders or as individuals. We will never accept someone calling us faction leaders...That's an abuse."

Ali Mahdi Mohammad, Aideed's arch foe who is now the single most powerful politician and clan militia alliance leader in Somalia, called on Friday for talks between all factions and an internationally funded conference to end six years of war.

But Mr. Ali Mahdi refuses, like the international community except for Sudan and Lihya, to recognise Aideed's "government."

Mr. Ali Mahdi also said his own fighters would observe a unilateral ceasefire, unless they were attacked. Mr. Kanyare said Aideed's forces never started shooting and were always attacked so the north Mogadishu leader's promise meant nothing.

Mogadishu has been unusually quiet since Aideed's death on Thursday, with supporters in his southern fiefdom mourning their hero while enemies struggle to mask their glee at his death.

Mr. Kanyare said any Somali could apply to be elected president but he believed no candidates had yet put their names forward. He said Aideed's death would not change the government thrust.

"We will never, never, never stop continuing to implement government policies to return to the rule of law and respect for human rights," the Murusade sub-clan militia chief said.

Asked how he could say such policies had helped Somalia after civil war since 1991 and hundreds of thousands of dead, Mr. Kanyare said: "It is better than for us to be colonised.

(Continued on page 7)

Opposition vows heated battle over proposed hike in bread prices

Prime minister says government ready to face confidence vote during extraordinary Parliament session

By Tareq Mornani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Opposition members of Parliament have strongly rejected the government's plan to increase the price of bread and threatened to call for a vote of no-confidence in the government if it went ahead with its plan.

The opposition's stand was reasserted by several Parliament members on the eve of Sunday's Parliament meeting, which is to convene upon the request of 41 deputies to debate the government's decision.

Government sources, however, stressed that the plan, which, officials say, was taken to help the country become self-reliant, will inevitably be carried out despite the protests.

Bassam Emoush, member of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party in Parliament, told the Jordan Times: "We will refute the government's claims that there is no alternative to meeting the deficit in the fiscal budget except through increasing prices."

"Sunday's session will enable the public to discover the true stands of the deputies in terms of supporting or rejecting the government's plan," said Dr. Emoush. He asserted that deputies who refrain from speaking during the session means they "implicitly approve of the government's plan" and that their silence "will be an attempt to escape from the problem."

"If the government fails to respond to the demands of Parliament and the Jordanian public and goes ahead with its plan, we will seek a vote of no-confidence in the government," added Dr. Emoush.

Under the Constitution, Parliament cannot move a motion of no- confidence in the government during an extraordinary session because only topics on the agenda in the Royal decree summoning Parliament for the session can be debated.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti has repeatedly stressed that the plan to raise the price of bread was a national decision and that no Jordanian citizen will be affected by the floating of the price. He has also emphasised that the government was not removing the subsidy on bread but substituting one method with another.

The prime minister had said that the rechannelling of the bread subsidy will secure an additional income to the people once international wheat prices go down because the compensation to be paid to offset the increase will be maintained and in case the prices went up again the government will introduce further increases in the compensation.

"I am exercising my powers as prime minister under the Constitution and the Parliament has the right to exercise its rights by voting confidence in the government if the deputies are not convinced by the government's views," according to Mr. Kabariti.

"The government is even ready to seek a Royal decree adding to the agenda of the extraordinary session the right for deputies to cast a vote of confidence in the government," he said.

"Should the government continue to provide the subsidy on bread in its present form, the country will eventually resort to more borrowing which would eventually lead to very serious consequences," warned the prime minister.

While the opposition continues to oppose the government's decision, it has to date failed to submit a practical alternative to the plan.

The government had said that it would pay JD 15 to each citizen annually to offset the difference in the price of bread, but would not be responsible for compensating an estimated 400,000 guest workers and an estimated 1.2 million tourists annually visiting Jordan (1996 figures).

Informed government sources told the Jordan Times that Mr. Kabariti will be open and frank in his address to Parliament Sunday, explaining the reasons behind the government's plan. The prime minister's address will be very important because it will shed light on the dangers inherent in maintaining the present form of bread subsidy, they said.

Centrist deputies said that the decision to increase bread prices is a serious one because it affects all public sectors.

"We are convinced by the government's justification for the move but we can only voice our objection to the plan otherwise we will lose our popularity," added these deputies.

Asked about their stand in the event the opposition deputies moved a no- confidence motion in the government the deputies said: "We will cross the bridge when we reach it. The price is one thing and a confidence vote is something else."

Representatives of the bedouin tribes in the central parts of Jordan protested the government's decision of last Thursday to increase the prices of animal feed saying that it will affect practically every citizen depending on livestock.

Saleh Al Fayez, a spokesman for the delegation which met with Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour told the Jordan Times: "If the government goes ahead with its decision on the animal feed, the result will be a popular outburst."

"We will resort to all democratic methods and even confrontations if need be," he added

He said that the government should hold the "corrupt" to account for their actions which led to Jordan falling in heavy debts rather than tamper with the people's basic food.

Mr. Fayez said that the people of the badia region suffer from poverty, hunger and unemployment and any increase in prices will lead to further complications in their life resulting eventually in an open outburst.

Uncertain but hopeful, Somalia enters new era

NAIROBI (R) — The death of General Mohammad Farah Aideed, scourge of U.S. and U.N. peacekeepers, might help peace develop in devastated Somalia for the first time since 1991.

His death was announced on Friday, more than a week after he was hit by bullets on the front line in south Mogadishu in the clan fighting that his ruthless quest for power had largely eogendered.

Somali analysts and diplomats following the anarchic affairs of the Horn of Africa country said that with Aideed *off the stage his supporters* and enemies could start serious negotiations.

"Hopefully there will now be a push for an accommodation between all the guys," one aid agency official said.

"For organisations sucb as the United Nations and European Union, his death certainly means the disappearence of the major bogeyman," said another senior aid worker.

An anti-Aideed Somali intellectual in exile said the dead warlord's faction would not fall apart but was isolated.

"Most Somalis think he was the main obstacle to peace. A lot of people died because of him and lost everything because of him," he said.

But Aideed's faction, the United Somali Congress-Somali National Alliance (USC-SNA), is still very much alive. It appointed committees with 30 members to take charge on both the military and political fronts. Aideed's militiamen were ordered to remain in their positions until further orders.

The 59-year-old general was revered by his partisans for ousting late dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991-1992 and for humbling the "imperialist" American and U.N. troops who tried and failed to whip Somalia into line in 1993 and 1994.

Aideed spokesmen adopted their dead leader's rhetoric, accusing "foreign forces" of *plotting his death.*

His faction is still militarily the strongest single force among Somalia's myriad militias.

But his fighters aboard their "technical" battlewagons have been on the defensive since early April, slowly losing ground to the imposing coalition ranged against them.

Aideed's kinsman and former financier, Osman Hassan Ali Atto, and his arch-enemy, Ali Mahdi Mohammad, have forged a military alliance with lesser faction leaders this year.

They seized parts of Aideed's south Mogadishu stronghold, captured his airport and chipped away his control of the few areas outside the capital he took over after declaring himself president last year.

If the anti-Aideed coalition survives his death, avoiding the classic Somali fate of collapsing once the common enemy has disappeared, diplomats say a genuine central power structure could emerge.

"Atto and Ali Mahdi are unlikely to react publicly until after his funeral" on Friday afternoon, a Western diplomat said.

"But his death can be a signal for peace, according to his opponents," he said in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, where foreign Somalia-watchers retreated after the last U.N. peacekeeping troops withdrew in March 1995.

"It could go either way but *for sure the balance of forces* will have dramatically shifted. In the best-case scenario it would mean a lot for aid agencies trying to help Somalis," an aid worker said.

Aideed regarded most foreign relief agencies with deep suspicion and threatened them regularly. He believed they were in league with Western interests opposed to him.

Prince Mohammad becomes royal patron of British Staunton Society

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal represeotative of His Majesty King Hussein, has accepted an insignia presented on behalf of the British Staunton Society to commemorate his acceptance of the position of royal patron of the society.

Prince Mohammad expressed his appreciation at accepting the patronage saying that this was an expression of the strong relationship that binds both Jordan and the United Kingdom, the Jordan Information Bureau (JIB) in London said in a statement.

Barry Martin, the honourable secretary of the society, said that Staunton sought Hashemite patronage to augment the cultural attachment, through chess, between the two countries and in recognition of Arab and Muslim contribution to chess, especially for their effort to introduce it to Europe via the Iberian peninsula, the JIB statement said.

HRH Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, receives the insignia of the British Staunton Society (Petra photo)

The insignia, presented to Prince Mohammad on Dec. 31, incorporates Jordan's coat of arms, the Staunton's Society symbols and Simpson-in-the Strand coat of arms, the home of British chess. It was designed by Robert Parsons, of the City of London School of Heraldry and was signed by various officials of the society.

The presentation was held at the Jordanian embassy in London and was attended by Jordanian Ambassador to Britain Fouad Ayoub. The presentation was made by Stanntoo Chairman Raymond Keene, Grand Master, OBE, Treasurer Brian Clivaz and Mr. Martin.

IAF team discusses Jerusalem with Turkish Islamists

AMMAN (J.T.) – A 10-member delegation from the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party led by the party's secretary general, Ishaq Al Farhan, last week paid a visit to Turkey at the invitation of Dr. Khalil Oron, mayor of the town of Qunya, who had visited Jordan a few months ago as the party's guest.

According to Dr. Farhan, the delegation "examined the Turkish Welfare party's achievements and the success of party members in assuming leading positions in the municipalities of Turkey's towns as well as the current situation" following the formation of the new Turkisb government led by Islamist professer Necmettin Erbakan.

Druing the visit, the IAF party delegation met Welfare Party ministers in the present government and presented them with a replica of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem in a gesture "designed to draw the Islamic Nation's attention to the Judaisation process undertaken by Israel in Jerusalem and the Islamic shrines there," according to Dr. Farhan. He said that the Welfare Party in Turkey had adopted a plan for "liberating the country's economy from Western hegemony."

The delegation included Mohammad Oweida, Mohammad Al Haj, Abdul Aziz Jaber, Hammam Saeed, Yaser Omari, Mamdouh Muheisen, Khaled Habannakeh, Mustafa Al Jaafari and Bassam Emoush.

Hebron observers left to drive in circles

HEBRON (AP) — Armed only with tape recorders, cameras and bright blue arm bands, 22 Norwegian observers came to this riven city four months ago to usher in a new era of peace.

Since then, they have done little more than drive in circles, white flags fluttering from their opel swing mini-compacts.

On Thursday, for instance, two observers listened intently as a Palestinian man told them an Israeli soldier had broken his car window and cursed him.

"We can do oothing, unformnately," one observer said, inspecting the smashed window. "Nothing other than to make a report, and wisb you good luck."

The observers were full of optimism when they arrived to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli troops and deployment of Palestinian police in most areas of Hebron, the last West Bank city under Israeli occupation.

"We thought it would be a new push for the peace process ... that life in Hebron would be a bit more normal," said Terje Fjermestad, deputy head of the observer mission.

But after Israel's May 29 elections and the advent of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahn's hardline government, plans for the Hebron pullout are on hold. The observers sit and wait, frustrated hy their marginal impact on alleviating hostilities hardened by generations of hate.

Under the latest Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreemeot, Israel was supposed to have pulled its troops out of most of Hebroo, a city of 120,000 Palestinians and 450 Jewish settlers, by the end of March.

Bnt after four deadly suicide bombings in February and March,

he previous governmeot of Shimon Peres postponed the withdrawal until after the elections, which he lost. His successor, Mr. Netanyahu, has not committed himself to the pullout.

On Friday, Norway told Israel and the Palestinians that the observers would leave by September if the troops are not redeployed soon.

The Norwegians have been to Hebron before. In 1994, they came as observers following the massacre of at least 30 Muslim worshippers by Jewisb settler Barucb Goldstein at the Ibrahimi Mosque.

This time, they were supposed to be the advance team for an international group of 160 observers who were to patrol the border between Palestinians and Israelis.

Iraqi defector says he's been granted asylum in U.S.

ATLANTA (AP) — Iraqi weightlifter Raed Ahmad, wbo fled from his teammates at the Olympics and denounced his country's government, said Friday he has beeo granted political asylum in the United States.

The U.S. Immigration and Nanralizatioo Service (INS) refused to confirm or deny the claim.

A document with an INS letterhead, sent hy fax to the Associated Press, said that *Ahmad's request for political* asylum had been approved. The document was given to the AP by an *Atlanta spokesman for the* London-based Iraqi National Congress, an organisation opposed to Saddam Hussein's regime.

"It has been determined you have established a well-founded fear of persecution were yoo return to your country," said the letter, which bore the signature of Joseph P. Martin, director of the INS asylum office in Arlingtoo, Virginia.

The *letter granted* Ahmad asylum indefinitely and said the athlete could apply to be a permanent resident in one year.

Ahmad, 29, said Thursday he surely would be executed if he returned to Iraq. He met with the INS, theo nervously waited for the decision, Ahmad said Friday.

"I was very sensitive, like a person waiting for exam results," he said through an interpreter. "But I was very optimistic. I know the American people will accept me."

Ahmad, who earlier expressed fear of reprisals against family members remaining in Iraq, said he has heard nothing abont the government's reaction to his defection.

He also said he did not know his wife's status.

The Iraqi National Congress reportedly arranged for her to be moved earlier this week from their home in Basra to a safe haven in oorthern Iraq's Kurdish region, where Iraqi forces are barred by international sanctions.

"I would like to hear from her. It would make me very happy," be said Friday.

NEWS IN BRIEF

The Kaaba to be renovated

KAABA (AP) — The Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine in Saudi Arabia, will undergo renovation for the first time in 40 years, the Saudi Gazette has reported. The English-language newspaper said Friday a wooden fence has been erected around the stone structure at the Grand Mosque in Mecca for maintenance work ordered by King Fahd. It said the renovation of the Kaaba will take two months, but gave no say how much it will cost. The renovation will be carried out by the Saudi Ben Laden group, which has in the past five years implemented numerous projects for refurbishing and expanding facilities used by pilgrims in Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet Mohammad — and the faith's holiest city. The Kaaba, a square stone structure believed to have built by Prophet Abraham, is revered in Islam as the house of God. The world's one billion Muslims turn towards the Kaaba in five daily prayers. The Kaaba has a magnificent door with works of gold weighing 270 kilogrammes. It was last renovated in 1956 during the rule of King Saud Every year, two million Muslims converge on Mecca for the annual Hajj pilgrimage. Other pilgrims visit all year round for off-season pilgrimage.

Malaria kills 30 in Yemen

SANAA (R) — Malaria and other diseases have killed 30 people in Yemen in the past two months following the worst floods to hit the impoverished Arab state in three decades, an official has beeo quoted as saying. "Thirty people have died in the governorate of Marib as a result of epidemics during the past two months," Hussein Al Hazeh, a member of an official high relief committee, told Al Thawra newspaper. He said malaria that struck after floods was the main cause of the deaths in the eastern province. Mr. Hazeb warned that half of Marib governorate's population of nearly 168,000 people was now suffering from malaria. "The medical centres and hospitals in the area are limited and the medical supplies needed to combat malaria are limited," he added.

Hariri urges EU-Lebanon cooperation

DUBLIN (AFP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri called Friday for greater cooperation betweeo Europe and Lebanon oo the second day of a two-day visit to Dublin, his Irisb counterpart John Bruton said. During talks with Mr. Bruton, wbose country holds the six-month rotating presidency of the European Unioo, Mr. Hariri stressed "the poteotial for economic cooperation" between Europe and Lebanon, Mr. Bruton said. At a joint press conference, Mr. Bruton said it was important for Irish and European companies "to be aware of the substantial economic potential of Lebanon," adding that Mr. Hariri's visit had made it possible to highlight the potential for cooperation. Mr. Bruton also discussed the Middle East peace process with Mr. Hariri, wbo held other meetings in Duhlin with Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring on Thursday, and with Tourism and Trade Minister Enda Kenny and European Minister Gay Mitchell on Friday morning.

Remains of Denktash's mother to be moved

NICOSIA (AFP) — Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash has won permission to have the remains of his mother exhumed from a grave in the western town of Paphos and transferred to the northern part of Cyprus. United Nations representative Gustav Feysel told AFP he had "obtained the agreement of Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides several days ago" to Mr. Denktash's request. Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkish troops invaded the northern third of the island in response to a coup in Nicosia inspired by the junta ruling Greece at the time. The Turkish Cypriots set up the breakaway Turkisb republic of *northern Cyprus in 1983, but it is only recognised by* Ankara. Mr. Denktash, president of the Turkish Cypriot administration, was born in Paphos in 1924 and his mother Emine died there 18 years later.

Smuggler nailed with elephant tusk

ATHENS (AFP) — Greek police arrested an antiques smuggler who was preparing to sell overseas an elephant tusk more than a million years old, authorities said Friday. Anastassios Alexopoulos, 49, was arrested Thursday in Athens after several days of surveillance by police acting on a tip that he was planning to sell a number of antiquities abroad. Police searched his family home in the Peloponnesus region of southern Greece and found a two-metre tusk, teeth and bones from an 80-tonne elephant. Paleootologists said the remains were between a million and two million years old. Mr. Alexopoulos said he found them in a river bed. Police also found cases of Greek antiquities ranging from cups to idols, as well as priceless Byzantine pieces dating from 1700 B.C. to 1000 A.D.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
13:03 ..... Cartoon — The Mask
13:25 ..... Here's Lucy
13:55 ..... Olympic Games
19:00 ..... Le Journal
19:10 ..... Olympic Games
22:00 ..... News in English
22:15 ..... Olympic Games

PRAYER TIMES

04:20 ..... Fajr
05:47 ..... (Sunrise) Duha
12:42 ..... Dhuhr
16:22 ..... 'Asr
19:36 ..... Maghreb
21:03 ..... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunication Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Moderate summer weather conditions will prevail with temperatures slightly below average and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

	Min./Max. temp.
Amman	20/31
Aqaba	26/38
Deserts	18/35
Jordan Valley	24/38

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 33. Aqaba 40. Humidity readings: Amman 38 per cent, Aqaba 33per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 798863
Dr. Nidal Dahleh 827195
Dr. Afif Shukri 898863
Dr. Sa'ed Tawfiq 788285
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'amneh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy ..... (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Harzallah 988075
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co. 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity 644281/6
Akileh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ..... (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital ..... (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital ..... (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ..... (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ..... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ..... (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ..... (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00 ..... Madrid (add) (RJ)
09:15 ..... Dhahran (add) (RJ)
09:30 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
09:55 ..... Larnaca (RJ)
10:05 ..... Riyadh (RJ)
10:10 ..... Dubai, Abu Dubai (RJ)
10:20 ..... Beirut (RJ)
10:50 ..... Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
15:35 ..... (Rome) (add) (RJ)
16:05 ..... New York (RJ)
16:55 ..... Amsterdam, Brussels (RJ)
18:00 ..... Paris (RJ)
18:25 ..... Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:50 ..... London (RJ)
19:15 ..... Madrid (RJ)
19:15 ..... Athens (RJ)
19:25 ..... Istanbul (RJ)
20:30 ..... Tunis (RJ)
21:30 ..... Frankfurt, Geneva (RJ)
21:45 ..... Vienna (RJ)
01:10 ..... Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

06:30 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)
12:30 ..... Doha (Q7)
13:40 ..... Bahrain (GF)
15:05 ..... Moscow (SU)
16:30 ..... Dubai (EK)
20:35 ..... Cairo (MS)
21:10 ..... Beirut (ME)
22:15 ..... London, Beirut (BA)
23:20 ..... Istanbul (TK)
23:30 ..... Athens (OA)
01:20 ..... Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
02:30 ..... Belgrade (GU)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:50 ..... Aqaba (RW)
19:45 ..... Tel Aviv (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:35 ..... Beirut (RJ)
07:00 ..... Rome (add) (RJ)
08:00 ..... Madrid (RJ)
09:30 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30 ..... Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
12:00 ..... Tunis (RJ)
12:15 ..... Rome (RJ)
12:15 ..... Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
12:30 ..... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
13:20 ..... Athens (RJ)
13:25 ..... London (RJ)
21:10 ..... Cairo (RJ)
21:45 ..... Damascus (RJ)
21:50 ..... New Delhi (RJ)
22:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
22:20 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:45 ..... Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:50 ..... Bangkok (RJ)
23:45 ..... Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:40 ..... London (KJ)
07:25 ..... Tel Aviv (LY)
09:15 ..... London (BA)
12:00 ..... Sanaa (IY)
14:30 ..... Doha (GF)
16:05 ..... Moscow (SU)
21:25 ..... Cairo (MS)
02:30 ..... Amsterdam (KL)
03:30 ..... Belgrade (GU)
04:00 ..... Athens (OA)
06:00 ..... Istanbul (TK)
07:45 ..... Beirut, London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
10:00 Amman (arriving at Marka Airport from QAIA) (RW)
20:30 ..... Aqaba (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman ..... 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus ..... 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus ..... 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman ..... 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/500
Banana	600/600
Banana (mukhammar)	520/520
Banana (imported)	800/600
Cabbage	400/300
Carrot	170/90
Cauliflower	250/160
Cucumber (large)	220/140
Cucumber (small)	350/220
Eggplant	200/120
Garlic	650/400
Grapes	420/280
Lemon	670/400
Marrow (large)	250/150
Marrow (small)	400/250
Mulukhiah	110/70
Onion (dry)	150/80
Okra	750/450
Pea	650/400
Pear	750/500
Peach	750/500
Pepper (hot)	320/200
Pepper (sweet)	320/200
Potato	330/220
String Bean	680/400

S IN BRIEF

be renovated

30 in Yemen

U-Lebanon cooperation

mother to be moved

ed with elephant tusk

MARKET PRICES

Home News

Famnus Lebanese singer Najwa Karam sings to thousands of fans at the historic Roman city of Jerash Friday evening (Reuters photo)

Queen Noor declares 15th Jerash festival over

AMMAN (J.T.) — Joining thousands of music lovers at the South Theatre, Her Majesty Queen Noor Saturday attended the sold-out performance of the popular Lebanese singer Najwa Karam before formally closing the 15th Jerash Festival for Culture and Arts by extinguishing the torch at the forum.

The highlights of this summer's festival were varied and plentiful, ranging from Sabah Fakhri's captivating performance and Rubbi Rabah's rousing sbow, to Majda Rumi whose commemorative song of the Qana massacre brought tears to both her and her audience's eyes. The Frencb Children's Choir lived up to their reputation as "singing angels" in both their performances at Jerash and at the Inter-Continental Hotel, while the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, the National Music Conservatory and the Jordanian Armed Forces Band were only allowed off the stage after performing five encores.

Strong women were a popular theme this summer with the Lebanese dancing group Caracalla's spellbinding show of the near-mythical figure of Queen Elissa, the founder of the city of Carthage, with the Jordanian artists' association's adaptation of "Medea," and with Sharif Khazandar's "Julia Dumma" play, which was a one woman sbow about the life of the Syrian wife of Emperor Septimus Severus of Rome. An interesting and little known fact is that Abdul Halim Caracalla, the founder of the Lebanese dance troupe, derives his ancestry from Empress Julia Dumna's eldest son, who was popularly known as Emperor Caracalla.

The Gulf and North African countries made an impact at Jerash with their beautiful handicrafts and arts exhibitions at the colonnade street and the Zeus' vault respectively, while the Darat Al-Funun poetry evenings, during which more than 50 poets from 11 Arab countries read from their works, was a popular intellectual retreat.

HRH Princess Wijdan Ali accompanied Queen Noor to the closing ceremony, whicb was also attended by Senator Leila Sharaf, the governor and mayor of Jerash and members of the Festival's Higher National Committee.

JCPS urges anti-trust laws

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Consumers Protection Society (JCPS) Saturday urged the government to draft anti-trust laws to protect citizens from mercbants whom it accused of hoarding certain goods in order to make more profits wben prices rise.

In a statement issued Wednesday, the society also said that a hike in the prices of basic commodities will inevitably follow the floating of bread prices.

The government is expected to announce the lifting of bread subsidies after the Lower House of Parliament debates the issue in a special session today, Sunday. The price of milk rose by about 30 per cent Thursday immediately after the government lifted subsidies on animal feed.

The government, however, will provide citizens with a monthly cash handout which it says will compensate Jordanians for the 200 per cent increase in hread prices.

JCPS President Mobammad Oheidat urged the government to ensure the efficiency of the mechanism it will employ in providing the compensation to offset the increase in the prices.

The society said that the prices of some commodities have already increased and warned that other goods have disappeared from the market because merchants were boarding them.

Dr. Obeidat urged the government to fix the prices of commodities whose prices bave been floated earlier to protect the public from mercbants trying to profit from the present situation.

Dr. Obeidat said the government is responsible for stopping such malpractices. But the consumers, the society statement said, can also influence prices by either reducing consumption of certain commodities or boycotting others whose prices mercbants raise for no convincing reasons.

Prince Hassan chairs HCST meeting on industrial policy

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday cbaired a meeting of the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) whicb discussed the industrial policy and its role in stimulating investment in the Kingdom as well as linking industry to vocational training programmes.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan Saturday chairs a meeting of tbe Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) (Petra pboto)

Prince Hassan, who passed several directives on these issues, also discussed preparations for a fourth Jordanian scientific week whicb will be beld later this month to examine the country's development plans and the utilisation of land and human resources.

Industrial policy was the theme of a seminar organised by the HCST last month within the framework of the Japan Week.

The HCST discussed the recommendations of the seminar concerning the industrial policy in the presence of Cabinet ministers and referred them to the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

The HCST announced earlier that it will organise the Jordanian Scientific Week on July 27 to review draft projects dealing with land and human resources and the country's needs of qualified human resources.

The Week will open at the [illegible] Jan University of [illegible] and Technology in Irbid and will later move to the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman.

Two tabloid editors to stand trial

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two weekly tabloid editors will stand trial at the Court of First Instance in the next few weeks on charges of slander and lack of accuracy in reporting news, a judicial source said Saturday.

Jalal Khawaldeb, editor of the weekly Akhbar Al Noujoum, will appear in court on charges of slandering Lebanese singer Najwa Anton in an article published May 11 under the title "A sex scandal of a Lebanese singer in Amman."

The front-page article, which was accompanied by a pbotograph, cbarged that the Lebanese singer, who worked at one of the hotels in Amman, had sexual relations with important businessmen and well known people. The newspaper also talked about Ms. Anton's personal life.

According to the source, Ms. Anton filed a complaint to Amman Prosecutor General Jamal Zougby, claiming that the newspaper has tarnished ber image and reputation.

Also to appear in court in the next few weeks is Tawfiq Kiwan, editor of the weekly Akhbar Al Asboua, on charges of false reporting and harming national security among others, the source said.

According to the source, Akhbar Al Asboua published a news item entitled "Two criminals rob a bank in Zarqa" on Nov. 30, 1995 about an armed gang which allegedly attacked and robbed a bank in Zarqa.

In its report, the newspaper claimed that two armed men entered a bank in Zarqa, threatened the clients and then police arrived and sprayed tear gas to control the situation.

The accusation sheet prepared by Mr. Zougby charges that this news item is false and that the newspaper failed to mention the name of the bank.

Charges pressed against Mr. Kiwan also include overlooking objectivity and honesty in reporting on news, publishing inaccurate news, and threatening the country's security.

Mrs. Khawaldeb and Kiwan were the fourth and fifth editors of weekly newspapers to be ordered to stand trial at the Court of First Instance by Mr. Zougby in the past month.

Ministry adopts new steps to limit flow of guest workers

AMMAN (Petra) — The number of foreign residents bave this year increased from 250,000 in 1995 to approximately 300,000 of whom nearly 30,000 are unemployed but continue to reside in the country, Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhanbeh said Saturday.

"Jordan has always opened its doors to Arab citizens from different Arab countries, hut lately the ministry has found that guest workers have noticeably increased in numbers, adversely affecing the Jordanian labour market and aggravating the unemployment situation in Jordan," said Dr. Shakhanbeh at a press conference during which be announced new steps to limit the presence of guest workers.

The minister revealed part of what he called a new integrated plan to better control the local labour market. He said the plan was endorsed last week hy the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of a ministerial committee that drew up its various provisions.

Under the plan, the Ministry of Interior has been requested to circulate strict instructions to border police stations. Before stamping passports of foreigners entering the country, border officers are now required to check for specific details concerning the worker's employers, the place of residence and the date and number of the approval letter from the Ministry of Labour. Visiting non-Jordanians will have their passports stamped upon entry with a phrase refusing them any work opportunity.

Visitors will have to inform border officers of their residence address during their stay. This step is to ensure that visitors do not stay beyond the approved period and offenders will be dispelled from the country and not allowed reentry.

The plan requires that police stations and governors enforce a 1973 law demanding landlords, hotels, companies and any other institution to report to local police the employment or residence of any visitor from another country within 48 hours.

The plan also reaffirms the need for implementing a 1996 law prohibiting guest workers from employment in certain trades and provides for intensive inspection campaigns to ensure that employers comply with the law.

Dr. Shakhanbeh said that the committee bas requested the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment to circulate specific instructions to various municipalities to strictly ohserve the law and apply it to the street vendors in their respective areas. The committee also urged the Ministry of Agriculture to refrain from issuing permits to guest workers for employment in farming unless the sponsors prove to be Jordanian farmers and in need of the guest workers.

NAF to investigate false claims for aid

AMMAN (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) bas stopped providing assistance to a number of Jordanians after finding out that these people do not qualify for its aid and have been receiving it on the basis of false documents, Minister of Social Development Hammad Abu Jamous said Saturday.

Mr. Abu Jamous said one of these people was found to be in possession of vast land estates estimated at 116 dunums in different parts of the country and valued at nearly JD 1 million in addition to JD 100,000 deposited in a bank account. The monthly financial aid given by the fund to that recipient was JD 32.

The minister gave no details of other similar cases which he said existed and did not specify their number.

"The strange thing about these cases is the fact that the beneficiaries had submitted documents endorsed by the mukhtar (village headmen) in their areas testifying that they have no source of living and deserve the NAF's financial assistance," said the minister.

The NAF, established in the mid 1980s to provide assistance to needy families, offers monthly financial aid of up to JD 60 a month or interest free loans to help the head of the needy family to start an income generating business. The NAF also offers aid to victims of natural disasters like earthquakes and fires.

The minister said a special investigation committee has been formed immediately to look into these cases and to study the procedures that led to their receiving NAF's aid in an illegal manner.

The minister said that ministry inspectors carry out periodical reexamination of the list of beneficiaries to ensure that recipients qualify for the aid.

About 22,000 families receive assistance from NAF.

Garaudy insists Jewish propaganda falsified history

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

French author Roger Garaudy smiles after autographing his book, "Attacking Zionist Thnught," to two women in Amman Saturday before concluding a three-day private visit to the country (Reuters photo)

AMMAN — Frencb revisionist Roger Garaudy, famous world-wide for his theories minimising the Holocaust, bas said that Israel was built on the basis of radical interpretation of the Bible as well as a deceptive understanding of contemporary history.

Professor Garaudy, wbo concluded a three-day visit to Amman Saturday, cited as an example of the Jews "erroneous interpretation of the Bible" the perception of Abraham "not as the father of all peoples, as he is perceived in Christianity and Islam, hut as the father of the Jewish nation only."

The 83-year old writer, wbo was invited to Jordan by the Arabic daily Al Dustour and the General Union for Arab Writers, presented his latest book, "The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics," during a lecture delivered late Friday at the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation.

"My book aims at finding out how Israel was able to carry on (with) its policies in complete disrespect of international laws," Prof. Garaudy told an enthusiastic crowd of nearly 1,000.

The French author, who converted from Christianity to Islam in 1983, said Judaism bas many similarities with "primitive tribal religions in whicb gods favour only one tribe to which they also promise a land."

Prof. Garaudy, author of over 20 publication on Islam and Islamic philosophy, condemned "the Zionist propaganda (whicb is) based on the exaggeration of the figures related to the Holocaust."

Citing scholars and researcbers of different nationalities, including Israelis, Prof. Garaudy said that one million Jews were killed in Auschwitz, and not four million as initially stated by the war crimes court of Nuremberg.

"We do not want to indulge in a macabre calculation, since the loss of one single life for racist or ethnic reasons is a crime against bumanity," be said.

But the Nuremberg court, he said, provides a clear case of manipulation of contemporary history by Zionist lobbies.

"Not only was the court not an international impartial jury, but it was also transformed into a tool of revenge," he said, adding that according to the statute of the court, the reports on war crimes forwarded by the Allies had to be accepted automatically and the court was defined by its president himself as "the last act of the war."

"There is a propaganda whicb has been capable of penetrating deep in Western societies thanks to the fact that the press and the media in general, in France as well as in the U.S., are almost completely in the hands of the Zionists," Prof. Garaudy told his audience on Friday.

"This propaganda aims at making people believe that the Jews were the only victims of Nazi hysteria," he said.

Condemning the U.S. for having "brought the world to the edge of collapse," and pointing to drug abuse and teenage suicide as indicators of the Western world's "decadence," Prof. Garaudy called for a total boycott of all American products.

Recalling Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi's successful boycott of British textiles, Prof. Garaudy said that "such a boycott is going to require personal sacrifices, but we have to remember that every time we open a Coca-Cola we befriend Western imperialism."

Prof. Garaudy, whose latest book was recently published in Arabic by Al Dustour, bas been a senator and twice member of the French General Assembly.

Active in Marxist-Leninist groups during his youth, author of over 50 publications and founder of societies for dialogue between the Western and Eastern worlds, Prof. Garaudy's views on Israel and Zionism have brought him both fame and criticism.

Foreign aid-workers kidnapped in Chechenya

GROZNY, Russia (R) — Two foreign aid-workers have been kidnapped in Chechenya, raising new fears about security in the breakaway Caucasus regioo.

Igor Pogosov, press secretary of the Russian-backed Chechen Interior Ministry, said the two meo, a Britoo and a Frenchman, disappeared on July 27 and a special task force had been set up to look for them.

"We received a phone call yesterday from someone wbo said he saw armed men hundle the two foreigners into a car in Grozny," Pogosov said. "oobody has claimed responsibility."

Tension is already high in Chechenya, whicb declared itself indepeodent in 1992, amid rumours that rebel forces are poised to attack Grozny, its capital, and that rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev will "return from the dead."

Checben leaders said in April that Dudayev was killed by a Russian rocket whicb homed io oo his satellite telephone.

Rumours that he was alive gained force wheo rebel Commander Salman Raduyev, who bad also been reported dead, reappeared and told journalists Dudayev bad survived but was badly wounded. Russian officials have dismissed the talk.

The rebels accused Russian troops Saturday of launching artillery raids in the south of the region and said 20 people had been killed and 30 wounded, Interfax News Agency said.

The agency, quoting Russian military officials, also said 12 Border Guards were hurt wben their armoured personnel carrier was attacked in Ingushetia, the region which borders Checheoya.

The kidnappings were the latest in a series in the region, where many humanitarian groups bave tried to help civilians caught up in fighting between separatists and Russian troops.

Western embassies have advised their nationals to stay clear of the region.

Britain's Foreign Office named one of the missing meo as Michael Penrose, 23, who was working for the aid group International Action Against Hunger.

The French Foreign Ministry said aid worker Frederic Malehdou had also beeo seized.

"Our embassy in Moscow is following this affair very closely and it is in close liaison with the Russian authorities wbom we contacted immediately," a spokesman said.

Gunmen seized two workers from the medical charity Medecins Sans Frootieres (Doctors Without Borders) earlier this year but released them unharmed after two weeks.

U.S. aid worker Fred Cuoy weot missing in April 1995. His brother said later he thougbt Mr. Cuoy and the three Russians he was travelling with had beeo executed on suspicioo of spying.

"We are saying they have been executed. We doo't know specifically who did it," Chris Cuny said in August 1995.

Some foreign aid groups, ecboing criticism from Russian human rights activists, bave complained ahout widespread abuse of human rights in the mountainous region.

"Chechenya touches in the most brutal way the most number of people," Racbel Denher, Moscow director of the human rights watch Helsinki Group, said Friday.

"We are talking about indiscriminate bombing and shelling of civilians, using the strategic advantage Russia has in the air."

The Chechenya conflict bas beeo marked by claims and couoter-claims since it began. Rouod upoo round of peace talks have brought no solution, although Russian oews agencies said a delegatioo had arrived for new talks Saturday.

"Our main aim is find out about the realisation of (previous) agreements and take appropriate measures for their implementation," Russian Nationalities Minister Vyacheslav Mikhailov told ITAR-TASS oews agency in Grozny.

Thousands flee island after Filipino Muslim guerrillas storm village

ZAMBOANGA, Philippioes (AFP) — Thousands of villagers fled their bomes on an island off this southern Philippine port city after some 500 heavily armed meo in fatigues, claiming to be Muslim rebels, stormed their village, evacuees said Saturday.

About 2,000 residents of the predominantly Christian village of Limaong, 95 kilometres east of here, said the men began landing on the island's shores Thursday aboard inflatable boats.

Zamboanga City Councillor Jaime Cabato urged the military to respond to the raid but military officials here were not available for comment.

Mr. Cabato said if the raid was confirmed to be the act of one of the major Muslim insurgeot groups, and was not sanctioned by the military, it would be a clear breach of ceasefire agreements with the government.

The raiders told villagers they were establishing a base on the island, said the evacuees, who came to this port in their own boats.

A Limaong fishpond owner, wbo refused to be identified, said the rebels warned civilians to leave the island, which they claimed as their ancestral homeland.

He said men told residents: "We have to leave the place or something will happen to us.

"Consideriog that they are beavily armed our lives are in danger."

A woman who also fled bere said the rebels took villagers' water buffalo and warned them to leave their homes.

There were about 7,000 resideots in fertile Limaong.

The evacuees did not know which Muslim insurgent group the rebels belonged to but the city official said the rebels claimed to be members of the regular forces of the main Muslim insurgent group, the Moro Natiooal Liberation Froot (MNLF).

The MNLF in June signed an interim peace deal with the governmeot, inteoded to end 24 years of bloody sectarian strife in the southern Philippines.

But the Christian majority in the south bas strongly opposed the peace agreement, which gives the MNLF control of a council overseeing development projects in the region, fearing it will lead to domination by the Muslim minority.

Meanwhile, tension rose in the towns of Sibuco, Siocon, Siraway and Baliguian in the southern province of Zamboanga Del Norte as 80 heavily-armed rebels of the MNLF splinter group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) invaded the towns' outskirts early this week, a source said.

Five militiameo were reported killed in several encouoters in the province, the source added.

The report came a day after the MILF announced the defectioo of 2,000 MNLF members, apparently disillusiooed by MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari's decision to ruo for governor of a smaller existing autonomous region as part of the interim peace deal.

But in geoeral Santos City, west of here, Saturday Brigadier General Raul Urgello, of the military's Southern Command, dismissed the MILF as a potential threat, saying they bad less than 10,000 men and were torn by infighting.

"They have to put their act together," Brig. Urgello said. "Sometimes we are there to mediate their internal conflicts."

Brig. Urgello was accompanying Philippine Armed Forces Chief of Staff Arturo Enrile on a campaign to urge opponents of the MNLF peace deal to give it a cbance.

North Korea seen facing famine

SEOUL (R) — Food shortages in North Korea have reached Famine levels in some areas and recent floods dim prospects for the isolated state, an aid group said Friday.

"North Korea will face great tragedy unless the weather condition improves in weeks to come," Tetsunao Yamamori, president of the Food for the Hungry International (FHI), said in an interview in Seoul.

Meanwhile, the International Federatioo of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said the increasing numher of flood victims with diarrhoea was developing into a serious problem.

"They have reported diarrhoea, and that is a direct result of the flooding," IFRC Representative Geoff Dennis told Reuters in Beijing by telephone from Pyongyang.

"It is a very serious problem... that bas got to be dealt with," he said.

The government and IFRC so far had managed to control the diarrhoea outhreaks with antibiotics, he said.

Mr. Yamamori, who visited North Korea from July 23-30 to deliver medicine and collect data on damage inflicted by last year's crippling floods, said the next six months would be critical.

North Korea bad suffered from chronic bunger, "which we call a silent killer", in the past six years, he said.

His Geneva-based agency offers food aid and development programmes in cooperation with international relief groups around the world, he said.

South Korean officials said North Korea's grain shortages in the past five years ranged from just over ooe million tonnes to more than two million tonnes.

"North Koreans now bave only 200 grams (seven ounces) of food ratioo (per day) in many places. This is famine stage level and North Korea will reacb a critical stage if this continues for several more months," he said.

"If you take only 250 grammes (8.8 ounces) per day for six months your body system will shut down," he added.

Mr. Yamamori said North Korea was relying heavily on crops for this year to ease an acute food shortage but last week's floods could dasb bopes of good harvests.

In Tokyo, Japanese aid workers who returned Wednesday from the North said fresb rains last month caused severe damage, flooding Pyongyang's roads and suburbs, creating landslides and waterlogging crops.

"The rice crops were completely drowned and only the tip of the corn stock showed from the water," said Chie Fuji wbo visited the North from July 24-31 to deliver food to children in the suburbs of Pyongyang.

Fuji quoted a North Korean official as saying: "What we feared has bappened, it's possible that the damage could reach unbelievable levels."

Yeltsin out of public view a week ahead of historic date

MOSCOW (AFP) — Less than a week before he is to be sworn in for a new term as president, Boris Yeltsin is still out of the public eye, officially "resting," while the Kremlin appears to be preparing for a prolooged absence.

Mr. Yeltins's aide Georgi Satarov Friday said the presideot was suffering "colossal weariness" after an exhausting election campaign and would oeed to rest for about two months.

Earlier, Mr. Yeltin's chief of staff, Anatoli Chubais, said he had advised the president to take "a real vacation" after be is sworn in for his secood term of office in a lavish ceremooy at the Kremlin Friday.

Mr. Yeltsin disappeared from public view shortly before the second round of presidential elections oo July 3, amid speculation about his health.

The 65-year-old presideot had two beart attacks last year.

But Mr. Satarov said Mr. Yeltsin's tiredness had "nothing to do with a serious illness, like beart disease or something like that.

"Of course, (Yeltsio) does not feel as well as he did in May. But he is in perfect iotellectual and psycbological shape," Mr. Satarov said.

Mr. Satarov insisted if something was seriously wroog, Mr. Yeltsin would be in bospital instead of in a rest home in the Moscow suburb of Barvikha.

Mr. Yeltsin retreated to the rest bome after a gruelling four-month campaign which had him crossing the country and even dancing with a crowd of supporters.

Aides will give oo firm date for his return to the Kremlin.

Since his abrupt exit, Mr. Yeltsin has appeared only briefly oo television, surrounded by advisors and looking thinner and tired.

A power-struggle which erupted immediately after the election between Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and newly-appointed national security chief Alexander Lebed has added to speculation about the end of Mr. Yeltsin's reign.

Mr. Satarov, in a oewspaper interview, said Mr. Yeltsin fully intended to serve out his four-year term but added the presideot bad reflected on a possible successor — mentioning Mr. Chernomyrdin, Gen. Lebed and Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

Even the Russian media has broken the tahoo on discussing Mr. Yeltin's bealth.

"Now that pre-election passions have eased, the question of the presideot's bealth remains," said the weekly Argumenti I Fakti, but added the issue was "worrying the West a great deal more than it is worrying Russia."

The real test comes Friday, Mr. Yeltsin's date with history as be takes the oath as post-Soviet Russia's first democratically-elected president.

The Communist oewspaper Pravda 5 reported Saturday that the ceremony had been toned down so as oot to tire Mr. Yeltsin.

"The original programme would bave meant the president standing for hours and then welcoming 600 guests for an evening reception.

"But it is not clear if a 65-year-old president, suffering from heart problems and known for his penchant for alcobolic drinks, would bave the strength to go through with it," Pravda 5 said.

According to Friday's provisional programme, obtained by AFP, the swearing in ceremony itself will last 35 minutes and a banquet follows late afternoon.

Jane Shelley, wife of American bostage Donald Hutchings (left) and Julie Mangan, wife of British bostage Keith Mangan arrive at Srinagar airport on Aug. 2. The two wives returned to the troubled state Friday while U.S. diplomats appealed to the people to help free the tourists kidnapped by the shadowy Al Faran militant group since July 1995 while hitch hiking in south Kashmir (Reuter photo)

Wives plead for release of Western hostages in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — The wives of two Western tourists kidnapped by Muslim rebels in Kashmir more than a year ago pleaded with local villagers Saturday to help wio their husbands' release.

Jane Schelley, wife of American Donald Hutchings, and Julie Mangan, wife of Briton Keith Mangan, met the village bead at Magam Rakh, the head priest of the local mosque and other villagers and asked for help to trace their missing husbands, witnesses said.

"Please provide us with clues about our husbands and we will be thankful to you," Mrs. Schelley told one of the village womeo.

"We want to know whether they are alive or dead."

Indian authorities lauoched a search of Magam Rakh two months ago for the bodies of the men and two other Western bostages after an arrested Muslim militant said all had beeo killed by their captors, but none were found.

Tight security surrounded the women's visit to Magam Rakh, 80 kilometres from this summer state capital, with police restricting entry to the village and searching several houses for arms.

Mrs. Schelley and Mrs. Mangan were also scbeduled to meet state authorities, police officials and leaders of the Muslim separatist movement in Kashmir duriog their three-day stay in Kashmir.

Their trip coincides with a visit to Kasbmir by U.S. ambassador to India Frank Wisner, wbo is also making efforts to secure the release of the hostages.

The shadowy Al Faran rebel group kidnapped Mangan, Paul Wells, also of Britain, Mr. Hutchings, of Spokane, Washington, and fellow American Jobn Childs on July 4 last year, while they were trekking in the Himalayao foothills with their wives.

The wives were released and Mr. Childs escaped from their captors on July 8, the same day Al Faran seized German Dirk Hasert and Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro.

Ostro was bebeaded in August last year by the kidnappers, who bave demanded the release of 15 imprisoned Muslim guerrillas jailed in Iodia in exchange for freeing the bostages.

Contact between the rebels and Indian officials broke down in November.

The abductions bave been criticised by most Muslim militant groups and the powerful All Party Kashmir Freedom Conference, an umbrella organisatioo of Kasbmiri Muslim separatist groups.

More than 12,000 people have died since the Muslim militancy erupted in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, io 1989.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training Kashmiri rebels, a charge denied by Islamabad.

Taiwan battles to recover after typhoon kills 31

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan Saturday battled to save lives and bomes as the death toll in the island from typhoon Herb climbed to 31.

Clean-up teams worked flat out to clear areas seriously damaged by floods and and winds in the savage storm which swept tbe country Wednesday.

"You bave to drive very carefully so as not to hit the trees fallen oo the streets or hit the people cleaning up the streets," a private car driver said on state radio.

State television showed people desperately improvising containers to get water out of their homes.

Police in belicopters tried to help people in mountain areas cut off by landslides.

"It's very serious, roads are totally flooded, we cannot land, so we can only drop food to them," an air police official in the central county of Nantou said.

State radio said the air police had dropped 8,500 kg (18,750 lb) of food to Nantou mountain village Saturday and had managed to evacuate 12 people.

Police raised the official death toll to 31 from 19 as the search for victims continued. They said 35 people were still missing.

Twelve more bodies were found in Nantou county, the area most seriously hit by the storm, raising the toll in that district alone to 23, A county official said.

"Now the flood bas eased and all governmeot agencies are trying to recover from the damage," the official said.

Thirteen of the island's total 21 cities and counties have now been declared major disaster areas, with three more counties deemed second-level disaster areas, wbicb qualifies them for government subsidies.

Taiwan's Ceotral Bank said in a statemeot it would offer financing support to banks under beavy pressure for loans to individuals or companies affected by the typhoon.

Last week, typhoon Gloria lashed much of Taiwan with torrential rain and high tides, killing three people and destroying crops worth 580 million Taiwan dollars ($21 millioo).

Herb followed Wedoesday before sweeping into southern Cbioa Thursday, worsening already serious flooding there.

The Taiwan cabinet's Council of Agriculture said Saturday that it bad sbarply raised its estimate of crop damage from typboon Herb. It estimated losses to agriculture and fisberies bad risen to 13.79 billion Taiwan dollars from its previous estimate of 8.1 billioo Taiwan dollars.

Meanwhile China's rain-swollen Yangtze River rose to record levels, threatening 180,000 people in eastern Jiangsu province, as heavy rains continued to deluge flood-ravaged central areas, official media said Saturday.

Officials said typhooo Herb bad weakened ioto a tropical storm, but maoy areas continued to suffer from high winds and torrential rains whipped up in its deadly wake.

Water levels in the lower reacbes of the Yangtze in the eastern Jiangsu province had risen to 21 cm (8.27 inches) above the previous record, and a main floodgate had been damaged, the official China Daily said.

The Yangtze, Asia's longest river, continued to swell along many of the seven cities in Jiangsu, posing a serious threat to 180,000 local residents, the newspaper said. It gave no further details.

There were no immediate reports of casualties, a provincial official said by telephone.

"The typhoon has weakeoed...but strong winds and rain could still cause damage," said a government official in the central province of Jiangxi, contacted by telepbone from Beijing.

Typhoon Herb pounded China's coastline Thursday and Friday, killing one person in southeastern Fujian province.

Turkish national hero's remains leave Tajikistan

ALMATY, Kazakhstan (R) — The remains of Turkish national hero Enver Pasha left the Ceotral Asian state of Tajikistan for Turkey Saturday, a Turkish embassy spokesman in the Tajik capital Dushanbe said. "The remains left at around 8 a.m. (0200 GMT) for Istanbul," the spokesman told Reuters from Dushanbe. The body will be reburied in Istanbul Sunday, the anniversary of Enver's death. Turkish President Suleyman Demirel is expected to attend the ceremony. Enver Pasha died aged 41 in a hail of machine gun bullets as he led Muslim guerrillas against Soviet forces in Ceotral Asia in 1922. He was buried by a local mullah in an unmarked grave. Enver was ooe of a ruling triumvirate known as the Young Turks whicb took the Ottoman Empire into World War I oo the side of Germany in 1914. He fled Turkey in a German submarine near the war's end in 1918. He later arrived in Central Asia after promisiog Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenio he would help spread communism. But, swayed by Turkish oationalism io Central Asia, Enver abandoned Lenin to join and lead the Muslim guerrillas.

Beijing clamps down on illegal police sirens

BEIJING (AFP) — China's capital has launched a oew campaigo against crime — this time against drivers with illegal flashing lights and sireos on top of their vehicles, Xinhua reported Friday. Beijing's chronic traffic jams have prompted underground sales of police sireos to people who want to get around the city faster. But the Puhlic Security Bureau bas had enough of drivers scooting through the traffic without permision, according to China's official news agency. Any drivers discovered with illicit sirens and flashing lights can have their license revoked and face a fine of up to 20,000 yuan ($2,400). "Only vehicles used by police stations, security forces, prisons, courts, procuratorates and fire and rescue teams are permitted to use flashiog lights and sireos," the dispatch warned.

Callers mix up help line with sex line

TALLAHASSEE, Florida (AFP) — Many Florida telephone customers trying to dial a toll-free number to clear up questioos about a new area code are ending up getting a telephone sex line, a state official said. To cope with the growing number of customers in Broward Couoty, the Bellsouth Telephone Company established a new area code. An area code, which determines what part of the couotry a call goes to, is composed of three digits that precede the normal seven in U.S. phooe numbers. And to cope with questions during the transition to the new area code, officials advertised a toll-free number for customers to call. But, just as the expanding client base required the addition of a oew area code, the telepbone company bas also bad to add a new prefix for toll-free calls. So instead of the traditional 1-800 toll free prefix which has been completely allocated, customers with questions were instructed to use a new 1-888 toll-free prefix. The 8's make all the difference. But when many people hear "toll-free" they still dial 1-800 out of habit. "Since we say it's toll-free, people do the natural thing," said the head of the Florida Public Service Commission, Joe Garcia. "They dial 800. But a woman gets on instead." A greeting message: "Hello, lover, you've reached the hottest, most seductive adult phone service in America."

Ex-Premier Debre, aide to De Gaulle, dies at 84

PARIS (R) — Former French Prime Minister Michel Debre, Charles De Gaulle's most trusted aide and the architect of the Fifth Republic, died Friday aged 84.

The Gaullist RPR party said he died at his home in the village of Montlouis-Sur-Loire in central France after a long illness.

Debre, often described as more Gaullist than his mentor, was put in cbarge of drafting the constitution of France's 38-year-old Fifth Repuhlic and was its first prime minister when De Gaulle became president in 1959.

Fellow Gaullists paid trihute to him as a father of the country's political stability.

"France has lost one of its greatest servants," Gaullist President Jacques Chirac, whose first act when he was elected last year was to visit Debre, said in a message of condolence.

"He was a father of our constitution, to which our nation owes its stability... His work is immense."

Debre, a resistance disciple of De Gaulle's during World War II and a prickly nationalist, beld every major government post apart from president. He was prime minister from 1959 to 1962 and later served as defence, finance and foreign minister.

Prime Minister Alain Juppe, the head of tbe Gaullist Party, hailed him as a great statesman wbo had left a lasting mark on Freuch politics.

A supporter of French rule in Algeria, Debre led the government from 1959 to 1962 in a period of bitter civil strife over De Gaulle's decision to grant the North African colony independence after a long guerrilla war.

Former Premier Jacques Chaban-Delmas hailed Debre as a brother and said he had valiantly but painfully endorsed De Gaulle's Algeria policies over his own ideas.

De Gaulle and Debre were the target of assassination plots from diehard rightists when France gave up its colony.

"I don't really like politicians, but he was an exception. Debre and De Gaulle were really great figures," said former General Marcel Bigeard who led French paratroopers in Algeria.

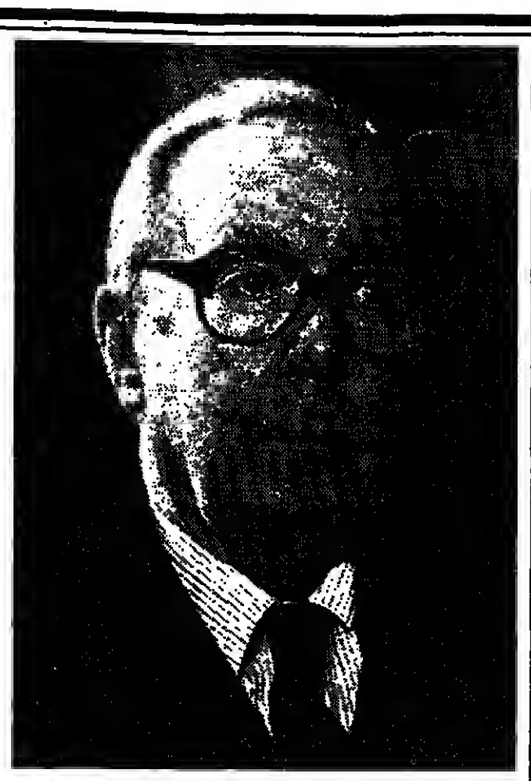
Debre, a leftists' Bete Noire, dropped out of the limelight in 1973 when De Gaulle's successor Georges Pompidou became convinced that he was giving his government a reactionary image.

Often regarded as humourless and ill-tempered, he won just one per cent of the vote when he stood for president in 1981 hut remained a prominent figure in the political landscape.

Born to an illustrious family, the son of a prominent medical professor and the brother of a noted artist, Debre was the father of the present Interior Minister, Jean-Louis Debre.

Another of his sons, Bernard, is a member of the Frencb National Assembly, a former cooperation minister and a prominent surgeon wbo was part of the medical team that treated the late Socialist President Francois Mitterrand for cancer.

Trained as a lawyer, Debre was a prolific writer of political books and was elected to the French Academy in 1988.



Former French Prime Minister Michel Debre died Friday at the age of 84. Debre, a resistance disciple of De Gaulle during World War II and a prickly nationalist, held every government post and later served as defence, finance and Foreign Minister (Reuter photo)

Priebke says Jews playing 'dirty game' against him

ROME (R) — Former SS Captain Erich Priebke was quoted Saturday as saying Jews were playing a "dirty game" to keep him behind hars after a military court ordered him freed without punishment for Italy's worst wartime atrocity.

Priehke was re-arrested early Friday following notice that German prosecutors intend to seek his extradition.

His return to jail on a temporary detennion order, upbeld by a Rome appeals court Saturday, ended an angry siege by young protesters which had kept the 83-year-old German blocked inside the court after Italy exploded in fury at the verdict.

"I understand their pain, which endures despite the years, but it seemed to me there were some fanaics there," Priebke told La Stampa in an interview at Regina Coeli Jail, where he has been held since early Friday.

"The people who staged that demonstration were a minority. I don't want to accuse the Jews, hut they're the ones who are playing a dirty game, wbo are trying to get me," he said.

The interview was conducted hy member of parliament Jas Gawronksi, one of Italy's most respected journalists. He was able to visit Priehke as a parliamentarian.

"I think they've got it in for me because I have become a symbol...I'm like the last of the Mohicans," Priehke said.

Priebke has admitted taking part in the SS reprisal massacre of 335 civilian men and boys, including 75 Jews, at the Ardeatine Caves outside Rome on March 24, 1944.

Megawati summoned, Indonesian activists banned from travel

JAKARTA (AFP) — Opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri has been summoned by police for questioning as authorities tighten their grip in a nationwide political crackdown, closing the borders to activists and forcing many into hiding.

Ms. Megawati received the summons Friday night to go to the Jakarta Police Headquarters Monday, one of her lawyers, Robert Tambunan said Saturday.

Ms. Megawati will cooperate and attend the questioning, he said.

The Attorney General Singgih said last week that Ms. Megawati and three other parliamentarians from the Indonesian Democracy Party (PDI) would be questioned in relation to a free speecb forum, held for six weeks outside PDI headquarters.

As the authorities step up their attack on the opposition, all speakers at the forum bave been placed on a travel blacklist, an unidentified military source told the state Antara News Agency.

"Their names have been sent to immigration offices at all sea and airports in the country to prevent them from fleeing overseas," the military source said.

In addition to the free speech sessions, the military has also said Ms. Megawati should take some responsibility for violent riots last weekend that left three people dead and 26 injured, according to official figures.

Youths went on the rampage following a military raid on the PDI headquarters aimed at expelling Ms. Megawati's supporters from the building.

Since that time the government has launched a repressive crackdown on activists connected to Megawati and anyone else they consider political opponents.

Lieutenant General Syarwan Hamid confirmed Wednesday the military's threat that soldiers would shoot on sight anyone who disturbed the peace.

"I have been in hiding since Monday, when my flatmate told me there were four security officers at my house wanting to arrest me," one activist said hy phone Saturday.

Over 100 activists have gone underground in Jakarta and are moving from one safe house to another, keeping in contact only by pager messages, he said.

The police are bunting for Peoples' Democratic Party (PRD) activists in cities across Java after senior military and government officials — without evidence — accused the group of being Communists, and fomenting last weekend's riots.

Police raided the group's office in Yogyakarta, central Java, Friday, seizing documents and copies of a political magazine published by the two year old group.

Analysts say the left-wing PRD, thought to number 150 vocal acrivists, had bad little or no involvement in the riots and could pose no real threat to the government.

"We are afraid that this will be a long process and that it will become a cleansing operation...tbe government is deliberately letting some of the PRD members go free so that they have the legitimacy to arrest the rest of us," the activist said.

Travel hans have also been placed on six opposition figures in connection with the riots, the daily Kompas reported. The six include Muchtar Pakpahan, the general secretary of the Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union (SBSI), Budiman Sujatmiko, PRD chairman, and four other activists whose names were not made availahle.

Mr. Pakpahan was arrested Tuesday and has been charged with subversion, which carries a maximum penalty of death and allows authorities to hold him for a year without trial.

Five student activists were arrested by police Friday in Yogyakarta as they held a demonstration outside the Gajah Mada University, the Jakarta Post reported.

Two other student activists, also associated with the PRD, were arrested in Jakarta Friday, the Legal Aid Insntute confirmed.

The institute has released a list of 20 people still missing after last weekend's riots. Police have indicated they will charge 123 rioters with subversion.

Sri Lanka rebels let civilians leave in food deal

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil Tiger rebels allowed 200 shaken and hungry civilians to move south to army-held areas Saturday, paving the way for truckloads of food and medicine to reach tens of thousands of refugees in rebel-held territory.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) allowed the civilians to cross the northern Thandikulam border a day after the Sri Lankan Red Cross hrokered a deal between the army and the LTTE to let the food convoys reach the refugees, who are fleeing an army advance.

"Army officials checked our identity cards and birth certificates to verify our ages," a resident of Kilinochchi town told Reuters after arriving in the government-controlled frontline town of Vavuniya.

Though the army has agreed to gradually ease travel restrictions from the north, it remains concerned that rebels may infiltrate and had stipulated that youths aged between 15 and 35 would not be allowed to pass.

Officials said the first food convoy was expected to leave for the LTTE areas Sunday.

Some 200 lorries laden with food have been stranded in Vavuniya for more than two weeks since the border was closed.

"The difficulty is that truck owners in the LTTE areas have been scattered because of the battle around Kilinocbchi," one Tamil government official who arrived from the north told Reuters.

"Some truckers are using the lorries as their homes. We have to find them and get them together," he said.

The army launched a major offensive on rebel-held Kilinochchi on July 26, forcing most of the town's 150,000 people, including refugees, to flee.

"We're very concerned about the civilian population," said Marco Weil of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Friday. "Tens of thousands of people have left their homes."

He told Reuters earlier in Colombo the ICRC had followed other Western aid agencies in leaving Kilinocbchi, the immediate target of the military push.

The rebels moved their headquarters to Kilinochchi in April after the military retook the Jaffna peninsula, which the LTTE had run as a mini-state for most of the 13-year separatist war which the government says has cost more than 50,000 lives.

Military officials said they believed the LTTE closed the crossing point just north of Vavuniya to prevent information leaking about their casualties and arms captured in last month's attack on the army base at Mullaitivu on the northeast coast.

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Super body needed

A PROMINENT economist recently complained that Jordan was among a few countries that did not have a government body responsible for the management of its economy and for the evaluation of its economic performance. The lecturer, Dr. Ibrahim Badran, who heads the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and who served as the undersecretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, further said that there were no recognised institutions in the country that could provide neutral and reliable economic data.

This seems to be an exaggeration of the situation but the idea of creating such an institution is, in itself, of paramount importance and deserves to be considered and analysed very carefully. Some people may argue that the Ministry of Planning or the General Statistics Department are the two bodies that manage the economy, examine its performance, and provide information and the data. They would point to the monthly, quarterly and annual bulletins and publications that are issued by the Central Bank and other ministries and departments as sufficing for the purpose.

The core of the issue, however, is not in the lack of institutions. Each ministry is responsible for a specific portion of the economy, pursuing defined targets and executing policies. Dr. Badran's complaint is not also about the lack of information or data. Each ministry or department runs its own statistics and prepares its own reports. As such, the gap is specifically in coordination between the various institutions that handle the overall economy.

At present, the prime minister's office is the focal point for all the ministries. Each one of them sends its reports, demands, complaints or views to this office which in turn, processes it before rerouting the material to other ministries for review, evaluation or execution.

Real economic coordination, therefore, takes place at the prime ministry whereas it should be handled at a different level such as "ministry for economic coordination" which should function as the focal point to various ministries.

What makes the present setup cumbersome is that coordination at the prime ministry is conducted between ministers and senior officials, while at a lower level (ministry for economic coordination) the coordination would involve junior officials from all the ministries concerned. In addition to streamlining and sifting the work of several ministries, this body would be able to improve and upgrade economic figures and information submitted by each ministry to a level where it would be accurate and convincing.

Some officials complain that available information and data is merely routine and often outdated statistics, that is only fit to be viewed from a historical point of view or to be evaluated from the perspective of writing talent and composing skill. That is why there is a need for a body that would collect all the relevent information and regularly update them, plan and execute economic policies and periodically evaluate economic performance.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the death of a Palestinian youth as a result of torture in Palestinian jails, a writer for Al Ra'i said that those responsible for this tragedy have offered a valuable service to Israel which continually tries to paint a bad image of the Arabs as being undemocratic, bent on committing acts of violence. The officers or officials responsible for the tragic death of Mahmoud Jamil should face trial and held accountable for their criminal act, and the Palestinian leader ought to take appropriate and effective measures that can prevent a recurrence of such horrible behaviour on the part of the Palestine National Authority's (PNA) cadres of different ranks and responsibilities, demanded Sultan Al Hattab. It seems that within these cadres there exists a group that has no regard to human life and therefore their presence in power is unjustified, he continued. The death of Mahmoud Jamil is a stigma on Palestine and the Palestinians because he died as a result of torture and without fair trial for alleged violations of the Palestinian law, he continued.

A WRITER for **Al Ra'i** daily discussed the question of possible danger to Jordan resulting from Israel's nuclear arsenal and said that any leaks from nuclear facilities in Israel, which is close to Jordan, would have disastrous effects on the Kingdom, particularly to the southern Jordanian regions, including Tafileh and the ancient city of Petra. Fahd Al Fanek said that any leaks from Israel's nuclear reactors could also travel as far as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. The writer said that by refusing to join the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and allowing international inspectors examine its nuclear facilities Israel could be hiding secrets from the world like possessing hundreds of nuclear heads with which to threaten the Arab countries including Jordan. Since the United States is guaranteeing Israel's strength militarily and economically and since Israel possesses conventional military power, equal to all the Arab countries put together, why should it be helped by the West to build a nuclear arsenal, asked the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Minimum wages — good or bad?

I HOPE I am not revealing a secret in reporting that Dr. Abdul Hafez Shakhanbeh, minister of labour, is planning to impose a minimum wage of no less than JD 100 a month. The minimum wage may be even more, depending on how this step is received in official and business circles which will be involved and have a say in taking the decision.

According to the new Labour Law, such a decision clearly falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour. A minimum wage can be found in most democratic countries with free market economies. It is by no means in contradiction with the principles of market economics, because such economics should have many checks and controls to prevent exploitation. Among them is the concept of minimum wages which secures the level of subsistence for the worker and his family, just above the poverty line.

Minimum wages can be described as civilised. However, most economists take a negative position towards the intervention of the government in the determination of wages, because minimum wages will, most likely, be higher than the balance determined by supply and demand in cases of high unemployment, and may hurt the weakest groups of job seekers, such as the young, the inexperienced, the old and the handicapped. Since the employer would have to pay the minimum wages anyway, he may insist on selecting only the fit and qualified.

The economists opposing the concept of minimum wage point out that its imposition may benefit those already working for low wages, but may hurt the unemployed by reducing the available number of jobs, especially when employers respond by reducing the volume of jobs offered to make up for the extra cost.

The Ministry of Labour aims at raising wages to a level acceptable to Jordanians. Since Jordanians have the priority to occupy the jobs before employers are allowed to engage guest workers, the policy of minimum wages will encourage voluntary gradual replacement and reduction of non-Jordanian labourers, estimated to exceed 400,000, thus taking care of one of the most important distortions and dislocations in the Jordanian labour market.

The U.S. recently witnessed vivid discussions over the issue of increasing minimum wages, suggested by the Clinton administration, from $4.50 to $5.20 per hour. It was evident that economists, this time, did not stick to their traditional position of rejecting higher minimum wages. Many economists approved the concept of minimum wages on the understanding that empirical studies did not prove that the theoretical negative consequences did actually take place in real life.

The initiative of the Ministry of Labour will be well received by the leaders of the working class and most of the political and social activists, but it will face fierce resistance from certain employers who feel free to exploit workers and reduce wages to the extent that the jobs becomes unacceptable, except to non-Jordanian workers who currently accept wages as low as 50 per cent below the line of poverty.

The issue is worth an objective dialogue before taking a final decision.

Burma — 'all they have is guns'

By Gwynne Dyer

"PATRIOTISM IS the last refuge of a scoundrel," said Sam Johnson — but Burma's military rulers believe that a little racism also helps. Not only is Aung San Suu Kyi unpatriotic for opposing Burma's generals, wrote the government-controlled paper "New Light" early this month, she also "had her blood mixed with that of an Englishman and gave birth to two half-castes."

Vicious talk was aimed at smearing Burma's pro-democracy leader as the annual meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened in Jakarta to consider admitting Burma to its ranks.

ASEAN did grant Burma observer status on July 18, but few people in Burma were shaken in their loyalty to a woman who has selflessly dedicated her life to her country.

There is no starker political contrast in the world. On the one hand, arrogant and brutal generals who have ruled Burma since 1962. On the other, Aung San Suu Kyi, a 51-year-old woman with no political experience who has incarnated Burma's democratic aspirations for the past eight years. A woman who, until 1988, had spent very little of her adult life in Burma.

"It is very different from living in academia in Oxford," she remarked at that time, as thousands of Burmese laid down their lives in non-violent protests aimed at freeing their country from military misrule. "We called someone vicious in the 'Times Literary Supplement'. We didn't know what vicious was."

Aung San Suu Kyi left Burma when she was 15 years old, to complete her education in India, Britain and Japan. In the 1970s she married English academic Michael Aris, an expert on Tibet, and they settled down in Oxford. There she lived quietly, teaching at the university and raising their two sons — until a visit to Burma in 1988 to care for her dying mother transformed her life.

The soldiers had already ruled Burma for a generation, enriching themselves as they turned South-East Asia's richest country into an isolated, terrorised and impoverished pariah state. But in 1987, dictator Ne Win went too far: he cancelled Burma's paper money and issued new 45- and 90-kyat notes — because those numbers were both divisible by nine, his personal lucky number.

Millions lost their savings, and something snapped. Ne Win's action underlined how a whole country of 42 million civilised and tolerant people had been hijacked and abused by ignorant thugs in uniform. It as not just the money: it was the humiliation. A new era was dawning in Asia, and Burma was not part of it.

All around were economic miracles, and Asians were learning the techniques of non-violent revolution: the Philippines blazed the democratic trail in 1986, and Thailand, Bangladesh, China and South Korea were hovering on the brink. So the Burmese lost their patience and in 1988 tried to drive the army from power.

Aung San Suu Kyi became the symbolic leader of the democratic revolution because her father, who won Burma's independence from Britain and was assassinated in 1947, is the country's greatest national hero. She became its real leader because she had great courage and political acumen. And though her presence in Burma at the right time was sheer chance, she was ready for her role.

"I only ask one thing," she wrote to Michael Aris before they married; "that should my people need me, you would help me to do my duty by them.... If we love and cherish each other as much as we can while we can... love and compassion will triumph in the end."

Suu Kyi has not left Burma since 1988, and she has only seen her husband and sons a few brief times. In September 1988, the army drowned the popular protests in blood; thousands were shot down in the streets. The generals dared not kill Suu Kyi, but they put her under strict house arrest. And then, believing that they had cowed the public, they held elections in 1990.

"They are like a chess player who only thinks one or two moves ahead," Suu Kyi said recently about her tormentors. In 1990, they completely miscalculated: 82 per cent of the Burmese voted for Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy, giving it 392 out of 485 seats. So the generals just arrested most of those elected and annulled the results.

Since then, the Burmese army has doubled in size, to half a million men. It gobbles up over half of the national budget, and takes huge rake-offs from the heroin trade (Burma has become the world's largest producer). But Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, and the generals are hated just as much now as they were five years ago.

Ne Win, now well into his 80s, remains the power behind the scenes. His front men are people of the kind of General Khin Nyint, the secret police chief whose main contribution to world literature is a tract entitled: "The conspiracy of treasonous minions within (Burma) and traitorous cohorts abroad". They have taken new heart from ASEAN's tacit blessing of their rule, and from the scores of potential foreign investors who come sniffing around in search of quick returns from Burma's oil and timber.

Suu Kyi's house arrest was lifted a year ago as part of the regime's attempt to curry favour with foreign investors. Now every Saturday thousands of Burmese defy the heavy secret police presence and gather outside her father's rundown house in Rangoon to hear her speak, and the regime dares not interfere.

But she is a Mandela without a De Klerk to talk to: the regime does not know how to quit gracefully.

The foreign investors are not helping. As South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, another Nobel Peace Prize winner, said recently: "International pressure can change the situation in Burma. Tough sanctions, not 'constructive engagement', finally brought about a new South Africa. This is the only language that tyrants understand."

But ASEAN never takes stands, and Britain sabotaged a recent European Union attempt to agree on sanctions.

In terms of cruel and incompetent dictators, Burma is right up there with North Korea and Nigeria, but Aung San Suu Kyi does not despair. "There will be change," she explained recently, "because all they have is guns."

Lebanese intellectuals take stand for democracy

By Andrew Tarnowski
Reuter

BEIRUT — A group of young intellectuals and professionals worried about the state of democracy and public life in Lebanon has banded together to campaign for real democracy in next month's parliamentary elections.

They have launched a groundbreaking civic action movement to promote public awareness of democratic rights and monitor the election campaign and the vote.

The group includes relatives of several well-known public figures dissatisfied with the traditional corruption of elections and with the way public life has developed since Lebanon emerged from the 1975-90 civil war under the tutelage of Syria, which has 35,000 troops in the country.

Grouped around the Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies (LCPS), a six-year-old Beirut think-tank, they have formed the Lebanese Association for the Democracy of Elections (LADE), whose emergence seems to have shocked the government.

Lade's aims are to study Lebanon's electoral laws and election system, propose reforms and lobby for their implementation. It has also begun voter education and public awareness campaigns and plans to monitor the election campaign and as many polling stations as it can.

"It is the first time anyone in Lebanon has proposed this and it has been a surprise to the interior ministry and the government, and they have reacted negatively to it," IADE's Secretary-General Paul Salem told Reuters.

Interior Minister Michel Al-Murr refused to accept documents LADE sent it to register as an association in April, and accused it of trying to usurp the ministry's role as election monitor.

"This association wants to play the role of the interior ministry in the issue of the elections...We will not hand over the state to...Covert associations which pretend to be democratic and hide political goals," Mr. Murr said this month, hinting that he might try legal action to stop it.

LADE's 40 founding members, mostly aged 35-40, come from across Lebanon's splintered sectarian spectrum. Mr. Salem is a Greek Orthodox political science professor at the American University of Beirut whose father is a former foreign minister. He describes the group as secular, liberal intelligentsia.

LETTERS

In the kitchen or at the helm?

To the Editor:

I STARTED reading the article entitled "Islamic council recommends 19-point plan for economic recovery" (Jordan Times, July 30, 1996) with interest and then dismay.

While I find it commendable that the Council of Islamic Organisations and Societies in Jordan (CIOSJ) should take it upon themselves to come up with a programme for the government "to help improve the country's economic situation and help adjust the balance of payments," I see no justifiable reason for them to target women so unjustly in their programme. They do that in point 16, in which they recommend employing males as secretaries for ministers rather than females because "males need the job to support families while a female is supported by her parents or husband."

They add that many secretaries spend their income on "buying non-essential commodities... (and) luxury items. Some of the female secretaries come from wealthy families and only want to kill time at work and so deprive the needy of earning an income."

I must have missed the latest study on ministers' female secretaries and the dispersal of their income, on which CIOSJ's last point was based!

The studies that I have read and which were highlighted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing last year showed that women who were granted loans/financial aid tend to reinvest 97 per cent of it into raising the living standard of their families, their children's education, etc., whereas men would invest less than half of that amount into improving their families' well-being. Women are now being cited as a safer credit risk then men, to which the meteoric success of the Grameen Bank attests.

I do not mean in this letter to pit men against women, but I find it both deplorable and disappointing that an economic recovery programme would recommend the removal of women from their jobs for incongruous and unsubstantiated reasons.

The next step, I suppose, would be to suspend education for women (since they are not going to work anyway, what's the use of investing so much money in them?) and leave them at home-pregnant and bare foot in the kitchen.

Nadine Shubailat,
Amman.

Who carries the day?

To the Editor:

CENTURIES AGO, the Muslims create one of the most powerful empires known to mankind. Centuries before that, the Persians had created another such empire along with the Romans, the Greeks and many other civilisations. Centuries' old traditions continue to form the essence of our daily lives in many respects. One such tradition is the Olympic Games.

At first, I did not know what to make of Ali Kassay's magnificent last column "Flamin' games" Jordan Times, July 31, 1996). I later, however, realised that it was simply a magnificent piece of writing, but obviously one without any purpose or objective.

One plausible thought that did cross my mind was that he was upset that the ancient Greeks did not classify memorising dictionaries as an Olympic sport, or that their descendants did not include Greek mythology as one either.

What baffled me was that someone with such undoubted sophistication and culture would actually contemplate spending his July evenings in front of a television set, be it in the absence of Olympic coverage or even with the Olympics going on, as seems to be the case. And what baffled me even more was that while claiming that he had no interest whatsoever in either the Olympics or TV coverage of them, Mr. Kassay knows every little detail about the television coverage of these games.

He obviously has something against the Olympics. It simply does not stand to reason to have admirable athletes from around the world competing in the Atlanta Games dismissed by him as idiots who should not even bother. A discipline with millions of obviously "abnormal" enthusiasts around the world was brushed aside by him as nothing but a futile attempt to "heave a large lump of iron upwards..." I suppose one could argue the same about the space shuttle; after all it is nothing but a large lump of metal that hurls itself upwards...! Who cares about the discovery of the worlds beyond anyway?

As for those of us who do speak Arabic and may not be terribly conversant with some sports, believe it or not, some of us do appreciate the running commentary by those gentlemen who have spent sleepless nights over the last fortnight to cover the events. Naturally, this does not pass without the occasional mistake or unnecessary remarks. You find this in every television or radio station. I remember watching the England vs. New Zealand rugby match last year when the mighty New Zealander, Jonah Lomu, was in the process of bulldozing half the English team, and the English TV commentator could only come up with: "I hear he has a very low IQ, you know..." as a "brilliant" contribution to the commentary!

I do not know how Mr. Kassay produced his theory that what you see on Channel 2 JTV in terms of almost continuous Olympic coverage is due to budgetary constraints. If anything, it probably shows that JTV has gone slightly over the top on this one.

Finally, for those of us lesser mortals who speak English only as a second language, it might help if the Jordan Times could issue cut-away coupons for dictionaries, so that the masses can find themselves better equipped to read and comprehend this beautiful weekly column. Right now, if I am given the choice between spending my August evenings watching the Olympics or having the Wednesday issue of the Jordan Times shoved under my nose.... I am afraid that Suleiman Boringian and blinding-flash-of-the-obvious commentaries would carry the day!

Nasser S. Judeh,
Director, JTV,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Customs men get X-ray eyes... but some say fancy gadgets don't do the intelligence work

IN FUTURE the only way to protect your modesty before boarding a plane may be to wear lead-lined underwear, writes Steve Connor, science correspondent. A new X-ray machine, designed to combat terrorists and drug smugglers, "strip searches" people by producing nude images.

British authorities are studying trials of the device closely, but even a cursory glance reveals its potential as an ogler's delight. Designed to reveal hidden soft objects missed by normal security detectors, the new machine gives a clear picture of whether you are an Adonis or an Aphrodite — or not.

"The image is not like seeing something in Playboy magazine. Bnt there is no question you can tell a man from a woman," said Hamer Boynton, a consultant to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), wbo has assessed the American-made machine. Operators can focus on suspicious details at the touch of a button.

British customs, airports, prisons and the House of Commons are studying the machine, whicb is a significant advance on current security detectors.

The low doses of X-rays produced by the machine are able to penetrate clothing but are partly reflected by he skin. A detector captures the reflected rays, whicb can then be used to build up a detailed image of the "naked" body.

Hard objects, sucb as guns and knives, are easily identified, as are non-metallic objects such as bags of cocaine or body belts stuffed with plastic explosives, the weapon favoured by suicide bombers.

Security officials at the Palace of Westminster have studied the device but have so far declined to test It on visitors, let alone MPs. "I don't think MPs would like their constituents screened in a naked situation," said Matthew Heaton, European director of American Science and Engineering, the machine's manufacturers.

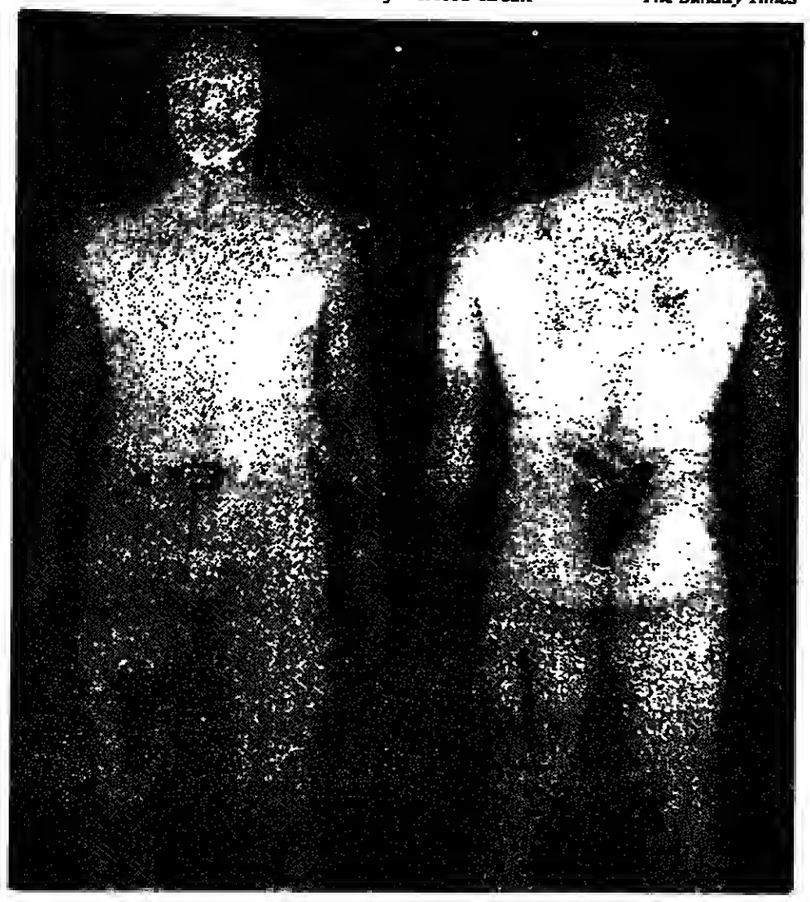
Officials at HM Customs bave tested the machine as a possible alternative to strip searching, which has to take place in the presence of a doctor. The only disappointment is that it fails to detect small quantities of drugs hidden inside body orifices.

The customs service and prisons are likely to be the first to use the machine in Britain because of the limitations of existing metal detectors, according to Heaton.

Some American prisons are already using the machine and airports are likely to introduce it within the next few years, according to a report by a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) scientific committee, though questions of privacy will bave to be resolved first, particularly as people and incidents filmed by closed-circuit television security systems have previously been sold on video for entertainment.

Such considerations are less sensitive outside the public services, bowever. A leading gold merchant is likely to become the first private customer for the machine in Britain, says Heaton. He intends using the device to ensure that gold leaf is not smuggled from his premises.

The Sunday Times



The X-ray security machine strips suspects down

By Joseph Finder

WELLFLEET, Massachusetts — Whether or not the crash of TWA Flight 800 was caused by terrorists, Americans are demanding heightened airport security to ensure against another tragedy. Indeed, security measures at airports must be enhanced, but people are deluding themselves if they think this is the way to prevent terrorist attacks.

Even the most sophisticated luggage scanners are enormously limited. It is not something that airline or law enforcement officials are comfortable talking about, but the million-dollar machines we have been hearing so much about lately — the ones that have been installed in only three American airports — are still of limited value. They may represent an improvement at detecting plastic explosives, but they are unlikely to be reliable at detecting certain other forms of explosives.

These machines, which use a mix of X-ray and CAT-scan technology to generate three-dimensional images of what is inside bags, are programmed to locate substances that have the density of plastic explosives. But many explosive materials, like foams or liquid rocket propellants, have a lower density than plastic, are almost as powerful and can escape detection.

Terrorists will always figure out a way to defeat whatever security measures are put into place. They always have.

What, then, can be done to prevent attacks? Early warnings of terrorist plots can be provided by good intelligence, but here, too, there are great constraints. It is extremely difficult, sometimes impossible, to penetrate terrorist organisations.

"What are terrorists, or would-be terrorists, to make of a nation that retaliates forcefully by bombing Iraq's intelligence headquarters after learning of a plot to assassinate former President George Bush, yet hesitates to go after the Libyan bombers who brought down Pan Am Flight 103?"

There is a role for tecbnical intelligence agencies, chiefly the U.S. National Security Agency and its British equivalent, the government communications headquarters. They are quite skilled at intercepting communications — voice, data, faxes — around the world and combing them for certain "trigger" words in a designated string order.

Such intercepts rely on locating targets, which can be done only by buman intelligence. To recruit the people who are well placed takes money and patience, and rarely shows results. It is not surprising that in the last decade or so the CIA has cut back drastically on human intelligence. But that is a mistake.

The FBI's counterterrorist abilities are impressive, but without the support of intelligence agencies they will remain ineffectual at preventing terrorist incidents.

Both the CIA's and the Defence Intelligence Agency's counterterrorism abilities remain woefully undeveloped and a low priority. In the CIA, counterterrorism is not an area where many are likely to make a career; the probability of success, after all, is low.

Intelligence insiders complain of being hampered by all manner of bureaucratic problems. We're awfully good at collecting data, they say, and even better at "briefing" it, but we're weak at putting it into a usable form. Analysts spend far too much time chasing data and not enough time analysing it.

And there is a larger problem. As a people, we Americans tend to react in fits and starts. We lurch from isolationism to the gung-bo patriotism of the Gulf war and back again. What are terrorists, or would-be terrorists, to make of a nation that retaliates forcefully by bombing Iraq's intelligence headquarters after learning of a plot to assassinate former President George Bush, yet hesitates to go after the Libyan bombers who brought down Pan Am Flight 103?

America's is a culture of seat belts and air bags. We believe we bave a natural right to a risk-free environment, and we are appalled when the fallacy of that belief is brought home.

We have been astonishingly lucky. Band-Aid measures like the use of more and more sophisticated detection gadgetry may reassure a jittery public, but they are no subsitute for facing the multipolar threats of a post-cold war world head-on.

The writer is author of the novel "The Zero Hour". This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

World's oldest tyrannosaur found in Thailand

By Robert Birsel
Reuter

PHU WIANG, Thailand — Dinosaur bones found in a Thai forest suggest the ferocious tyrannosaurus rex, the king of dinosaurs that stalked pre-historic North America, originated in Asia.

A joint Thai-Frencb team has discovered the fossilised remains of a dinosaur they think is the grandfather of all tyrannosaurs, 20 million years older than the oldest specimen of the fierce, meat-eating dinosaur previously found.

"We have found that many of the cbaracteristics are the same as the tyrannosaurs thougb more primitive," Thai researcher Varavudh Snteethorn said of the dinosaur.

The creature has been dubbed siamotyrannus isanensis, from Thailand's former name, Siam, and the name of the northeastern Isan region of the country where it was found.

"It has more similarities to the tyrannosaurs than any other carnivore, it's the same family," said Mr. Varavudh, Thailand's leading palaeontologist, wbo works with the industry ministry's Department of Mineral Resources.

The remains of the nearly-complete skeleton, whicb is about 120 million years old, were found embedded in rock in a forest in the Phu Wiang National Park in Khon Kaen Province in 1994.

"We think the tyrannosaur evolved in this area and then dispersed to other areas," Mr. Varavudh told Reuters.

"At that time all the continents were one, they had not separated yet, so we think it dispersed and then after that the continents separated," he said.

The tyrannosaurus rex has been found only in North America and lived some 50 million years after the siamotyrannus isanensis.

The Thai creature was about 6.5 metres long, about half the size of the tyrannosaurus rex, reflecting a natural tendency for all animals to grow in size as they evolve, as long as the conditions are right, Mr. Varavudh said.

Though the remains of some 10 different dinosaur species have been discovered in Thailand, most have been herbivorous sauropods — plant-eating dinosaurs which walked on all four legs and had long necks and long tails.

The siamotyrannus isanensis is the first near-complete fossilised carnivorous dinosaur found in Thailand. The animal was bipedal, walking mostly on its rear legs with a sbort neck and short forelegs, good for grabbing and bolding prey.

To the disappointment of Mr. Varuvudh and his team, the siamotyrannus isanensis is missing its bead.

"It's very rare to find a dinosaur bead. It's fragile, made of small bones, lightly built and it decays and disappears very easily," Mr. Varuvudh said.

The first dinosaur remains were discovered in Thailand by geologists prospecting for uranium in 1976. Systematic searches and excavations by joint Thai-French teams were started in the early 1980s.

Researcbers soon realised that the best dinosaur remains in southeast Asia were dotted jnst below the surface of northeast Thailand.

The relative abundance of dinosaur fossils is not because prehistoric Thailand, covered in simple ferns and fern trees, was a particularly hospitable environment for the animals.

Their remains have survived so well in Thailand, as well as in parts of China and India, because of an accident of geology.

"Only sedimentary rock can preserve fossils," Mr. Varavudh said, adding that such stone is found on, or just below, the top soil, across mnch of northeastern and northern Thailand. "Igneous (volcanic) or metamorphic rock cannot preserve fossils."

In neighbouring Kalasin Province Mr. Varuvudh and his team are excavating a site about the size of a tennis court whicb contains the remains of several herbivorous dinosaurs.

Mr. Varavudb said the site must have been a bend in a prehistoric river where the carcasses of the dead animals drifted and were trapped and quickly covered by layers of silt.

That silt is now rock which the researchers chip away at with chisels to reveal the fossilised skeletons.

Mr. Varavudh hopes that one day a museum will be built where the fossils can be pieced together and exhibited but for the time being be and his team continue their digging and their search for more remains on a shoe-string.

"Palaeontology does not get a big budget," he said.

Thai researchers examine the fossilised remains of a dinosaur at a jungle site in northeastern Thailand (Reuter photo)

PNA court jails 3 policemen

(Continued from page 1)

After the clashes a fact-finding committee comprised of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders and cabinet ministers was established and met on Saturday with community leaders in Tulkarm.

Ibrahim Hadaydeh was killed on Friday when some 2,000 protesters stormed a Tulkarem jail freeing 40 Hamas prisoners. The inmates surrendered later in the day to PNA police after taking part in Hadaydeh's funeral, a Hamas official said. The protesters were demanding the release of imprisoned relatives on hunger strike.

The PLO jailed hundreds of Hamas activists after a suicide bombing spree in February and March killed 59 people in Israel. Hamas has spearheaded Palestinian opposition to PLO-Israel peace moves.

Residents said that Palestinian police shot dead Hadaydeh, 44, but the Palestinian news agency WAFA quoted an official source saying Hamas gunmen killed the man by opening fire on the crowd and blaming Hamas for instigating the riot.

On Saturday Hamas called for an uprising and renewed attacks against Israel to avenge the two deaths.

Hamas accused the PNA of "selling out to Israeli occupiers" and "depriving Palestinians of their rights" by serving the interests of the Jewish state.

"Hamas considers the events in Tulkarem and Nablus as the beginning of a popular uprising against the Palestinian Authority," the statement said.

The group rejected Mr. Arafat's charges that it was behind the unrest. It also reiterated its call for the release of its members held in Palestinian jails.

"We call upon our fighters in the Izzeddine Al-Qassam brigades...To strike Zionist targets in response to the crimes of Arafat's authority and his militias," said a Hamas statement.

Aideed's factions spurn Ali Mahdi's peace offer

(Continued from page 1)

"We fight among ourselves and we know what we are doing. But if someone comes and colonises us, it is the worst."

Mr. Kanyare denied Aideed, 62, was assassinated or even shot. His own spokesmen said on Friday he died of a heart attack during an operation on wounds after he was shot several times.

"Some people speculated be was wounded in war and then he died. But that's bullshit. It is not true. We know be died of a heart attack," said Mr. Kanyare, adding that no one was to blame.

Ordinary Somalis were unsure and divided on Saturday over whether Aideed's death increased the chances for an end to war.

"I despair of peace," 26-year-old Asha Mohammad said with bitter resignation from her bed in a north Mogadishu bospital.

Asha, six months pregnant, was hit by a bullet on July 25 during clashes in the southwest Mogadishu district of medina, a day after aides said Aideed was shot in fighting in the area.

The round that hit Asha slammed into her uterus, killing her foetus and severing an artery in her upper leg. Surgeons removed the dead foetus and said the mother of three would soon leave bospital to her husband.

More than 10,000 people, many wailing and weeping, attended the funeral on Friday of their leader and self-declared president, whose rag-tag fighters bumiliated the might of the U.S. military in 1993 and pushed U.N. peacekeepers out in 1994.

The "foreign minister" appointed by Aideed blamed the European Union Saturday for all the fighting in Somalia.

World oil discovery slump hits reserves

LONDON (R) — There's no danger just yet of world oil reserves running dry. But 1995 again failed to unearth sufficient deposits to replace the vast volumes of crude consumed each year, a leading consultancy has said

Despite new technology which has slashed exploration costs and allowed access to previously non-commercial fields, new world oil discoveries last year slumped badly, Geneva-based Petroconsultants said in an annual survey.

"The failure of exploration to replace current production was a common phenomenon worldwide," Petroconsultants said. "Of the significant oil-producing nations in the world, only Algeria, Colombia, Congo, Pakistan and Vietnam added more liquids reserves than they produced."

But while oil reserves are sliding, the world's natural gas potential is still on the up, Petroconsultants said.

"World oil production is likely to peak around the end of the century. Attention will then increasingly turn to gas, which may not peak for another 20 years," the report said.

Wildcat exploration wells could eke out only an extra 5.7 billion barrels of oil, 45 per cent less than the 10.4 billion found in 1994, the survey said.

Discoveries last year were down 61 per cent from an average over the last nine years of 13.7 billion barrels. By comparison world production in 1995 totalled 24.6 billion barrels or around 67.3 million barrels per day (bpd).

Global reserves fell for the tenth year in a row, the survey said.

Worldwide reserves by the end of last year had slipped to 939 billion barrels from 958 billion the year before and were nine per cent below the 1.034 trillion still available in 1986.

At current rates of production, and assuming no more discoveries, the world would have 38 years of crude reserves left. By comparison in 1986, when production was lower, there were 48 years of reserves left.

Wildcat drilling activity slowed significantly again last year with just 2,730 wells compared with 2,943 in 1994 and 6,297 in 1986.

While production has already soaked up almost half of all oil found to date, gas output has used less than a third of discoveries so far.

Gas discoveries in 1995 rose to 50.8 trillion cubic feet from 46 trillion the year before but were well below the peak in the last decade of 156.2 trillion found in 1991.

Reserves of 4,695 trillion feet at the end of 1995, although still smaller than oil, were a little down on the 4,726 trillion the year before but unchanged from 10 years ago.

Yemen says economy improving with reforms

SANAA (R) — Yemen's gross domestic product had risen sharply and unemployment had fallen in the first year since it introduced economic reforms.

Prime Minister Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani told a news conference in Sanaa that in the year since the reforms were introduced in March 1995, gross domestic product in the impoverished Arab country rose 9.3 per cent compared with 0.46 per cent in 1994.

He said unemployment had fallen to 25 per cent by March 1996. Economists had estimated unemployment at between 30 and 50 per cent in 1994.

Mr. Abdul Ghani said foreign currency assets at the central bank had risen to $900 million from $450 million at the start of 1995.

Yemen has raised prices of fuel and electricity, water and telephone rates as part of an economic reform programme launched in March 1995 in agreement with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

"We are currently holding talks with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on the third stage of the reform programme under which Yemen will receive loans of up to $700 million over three years with interest of less than one per cent," Mr. Abdul Ghani said.

Yemen has received loans worth millions of dollars from several countries and international organisations under its reform plan.

The prime minister said Yemen plans to go to the Paris Club of creditor nations to reschedule its $8.2 billion foreign debt.

He said a Yemeni delegation will meet Paris Club officials in Paris on Sept. 22 and 23.

"We hope to get exemptions for about 60 per cent of Yemen's debt of $8.2 billion," he said.

Mr. Abdul Ghani had said in May that the debt was incurred by north and south Yemen before they united in 1990 and that $6.5 billion of it was owed to the former Soviet Union.

Saudi budget deficit sharply up in 1995

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia's budget deficit soared by more than 50 per cent in 1995 despite higher oil prices and plans to tackle the persistent shortfall, an official report has showed.

The deficit stood at around 23 billion Saudi riyals ($6.13 billion) in 1995 compared with a shortfall of 15 billion riyals ($4 billion) projected earlier in the year, the Arab Corporation for Investment Guarantee (ACIG), said in its annual report on Arab economies and investments.

The deficit occurred despite an increase in the Gulf kingdom's revenues by around 11 billion riyals ($2.93 billion) to 146 billion riyals ($38.9 billion) mainly because of a $1.5 rise in oil prices in 1995.

But the Kuwait-based ACIG attributed the deficit to a sharp increase in expenditure as the Saudi government was tempted by the oil price improvement to repay debts and replenish its eroding international reserves.

Spending was forecast at 150 billion riyals ($40 billion) when the budget was released in early January but by the end of 1995, it reached nearly 169 billion riyals ($45.03 billion), the report said.

"The actual deficit in the Saudi budget accounted for around five per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1995 but it is far lower than in 1994, when it reached nearly 8.8 per cent," it said.

Bankers said Saudi Arabia, which controls more than a quarter of the global proven crude reserves, took advantage of the increase in revenues to pay outstanding dues to local contractors and the last instalment of around $1.8 billion of a five-year-old debt to international banks.

It also transferred part of the extra income to its foreign reserves, which have plummetted over the past few years because of huge Gulf war costs.

Such transfers were reflected in a large increase in the reserves, which reached around $11 billion in May compared with $7.4 billion at the end of 1994.

They were as high as $25 billion in 1981, when crude prices were nearly double their current level and Saudi oil output peaked at 12 million barrels per day (bpd) compared with eight million bpd at present.

"Saudi Arabia is trying to ease the debt burden and bolster its reserves, which is very important for economic recovery," a Saudi banker said.

"The government realises higher spending runs counter to its stated policy of curtailing expenditure but it believes the deficit remains manageable," he added.

The bankers said a further improvement in crude prices in 1996 could help Saudi Arabia tackle a projected deficit of around $4.9 billion unless it is tempted again to increase expenditure through the year.

Turkey unveils ambitious revenue-raising package

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan has unveiled an ambitious economic package aiming to raise $10 billion in the country's fight against chronic ills of soaring inflation and big deficits.

"The package will not only reduce inflation but also narrow the budget deficit. We are aiming at an inflation rate below the earlier target," Mr. Erbakan told a news conference.

The most recent government forecast targets end-1996 annual wholesale price inflation of 65 per cent, compared with 76.2 per cent in June.

Mr. Erbakan's pronouncements continued in the same populist vein followed since he became Turkey's first Islamist leader a month ago, with little indication of the timetable for reaching the bold targets.

The package stressed a revenue-strategy rather than the tough stance on spending sought by the financial community.

State property sell-offs, accelerated privatisation and proposed foreign currency debt issues were targeted as potential revenue sources.

The government subsequently announced a 101 per cent rise in the minimum wage, giving further evidence of the populism which Mr. Erbakan heralded with a hefty 50 per cent wage rise for civil servants.

The minimum wage for workers over 16 years of age will rise to a gross 17.01 million lira ($203) a month, from the current 8.46 million.

While analysts fear such actions could inflate an already gaping budget deficit, Mr. Erbakan said the new package could halve the deficit, forecast to reach 1,300 trillion lira ($15.6 billion) in 1996, compared with a previous forecast of 861 trillion and the 317 trillion in 1995.

The package showed further the influence of the free-market economic policy of his conservative coalition partner, the True Path Party of former Premier Tansu Ciller rather than the radical, anti-Western policies advocated by Mr. Erbakan in the past.

A major plank in the government strategy involves improving the maturity and cost structures of domestic borrowing by issuing debt paper in foreign denominations or indexing it to foreign currencies. Excluding this, the package aims to raise 575 trillion lira.

Mr. Erbakan sought to attract more funds from Turkish workers abroad by lowering the threshold of special foreign currency bank accounts to 30,000 marks from 50,000 marks and to $15,000 from $25,000. The minimum maturities on such deposits will be reduced to two years from three, he said.

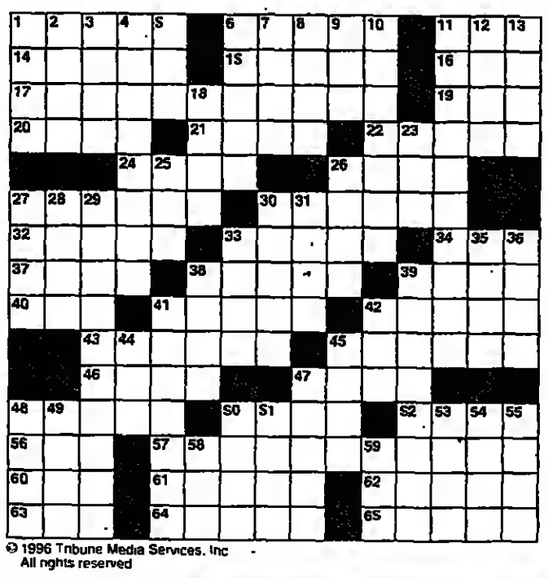
Turkey's 10-year-old privatisation programme, stalled by legal challenges and political opposition, will be accelerated after the imminent passage of a new law on the privatisation of state telecommunication company Turk Telekom and the rapid sale of state-owned Etibank.

The government raised its target for earnings from the sale of state land and buildings to 450 trillion lira over three years, after previously saying it aimed to raise 300 trillion from the sell-offs. It gave no indication of who the potential buyers for the property would be.

Mr. Erbakan hinted at further populist measures to come.

"God willing, our good news will continue to increase. The activation of our country's resources is at the heart of this good news," he said.

THE Daily Crossword by Melvin Kenworthy



ACROSS
1 Weary
6 Recoiled
11 Wander
14 Cat—tails
15 Handbag
16 Chopper
17 Examine in detail
19 Foulard
20 — -do-well
21 Image
22 Fourth estate
24 Bloody
26 They are blessed
27 Easy
30 Rio —
32 Astound
33 Clubs and spades
34 Letter from Greece
37 Um
38 Steps over a fence
39 Practice for a bout
40 Opp. of syn.
41 In any way
42 Violinist Isaac
43 Advertising supplement
45 Few and far between
46 Sudden intake of air
47 College official
48 Pundit
50 "I cannot tell —"
52 Senator Bob
56 Feline
57 Uninvited one
60 St.
61 Scandinavian
62 Sand hills
63 Legal matter
64 Toured the slopes
65 Toward the left

DOWN
1 Unite
2 — of Cleves
3 Swan or nose end
4 Invigorate
5 — Mines
6 Piquant
7 Author of "Les Miserables"
8 Asian land
9 Founded: abbr.
10 Enriches
11 Doorman's kin
12 WWII alliance
13 Low grades
18 Radial or snow
23 Cerise
25 Bullfight cheer
26 Spouse
27 — bean
26 To — (unanimously)
29 Punishes
30 Culpability
31 Streamlet
33 Asterisk
35 Seamen
36 English composer
38 Phase
39 Fails to keep a date with
41 Allots
42 Baden-Baden, for one
44 Bus. gp.
45 Vaticinator
47 Cubed
48 Wound reminder
49 Signal, in a way
50 Italian commune
51 — majesty
53 Not that!
54 Salacious look
55 Formerly, once
58 All right!
59 OK city

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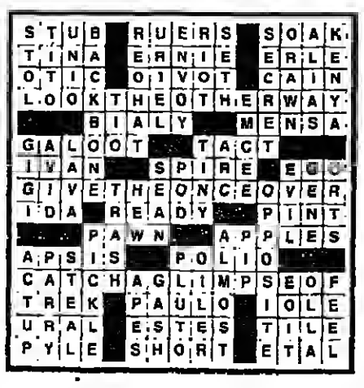

THE BETTER HALF® By Glasbergen

"My cloud broke down over your house. Can I use your phone?"

JUMBLE® THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HORTT

FLOTY

REVEWS

YOLDUC

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WHAT THE NIGHT CLUB ENTERTAINER WHO SOLD CARPETING GAVE CUSTOMERS.

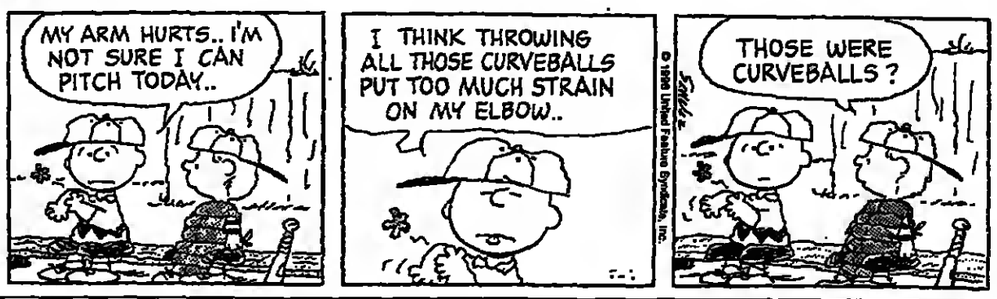
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

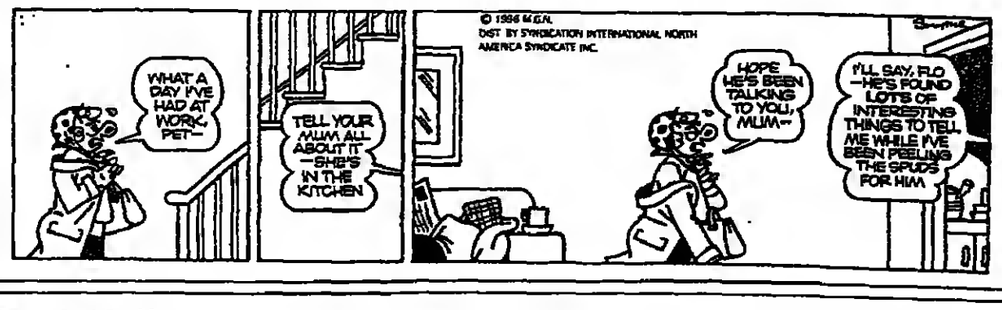
(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: DOUGH RIVET HIATUS BEFOUL
Answer: What the astronomer considered the distant constellation — OUTER SIGHT

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get busy with tasks around the house today which have been put off and which must be completed. Study your greatest desires and know how to promote them later this evening for their maximum profitability.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) This morning is a fine time to finish writing important letter to those in authority who can be of great assistance for your success. Visit close friends later this evening and you can have a fun time together. This time together is due.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Complete those small tasks around the house today which must be completed. Dive into your bills later in the day, write the checks which must be sent and thereby you will be able to stop being concerned of the consequences.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Restore your energies today by exercise or whatever treatments are best for you thereby you can stay healthy. Pamper yourself later this evening with some special activities which will give your peace of mind.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Handle the secret personal tasks today which are important and thereby you can gain great success. A good advisor can show you how to make greater progress later this evening in your career activities for the days ahead.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Try to be more understanding of a close friend who is having difficulties and show that you are sympathetic. Be sure to dress with care today since your appearance is a reflection of your good taste and breeding towards others.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a good day today to study your career activities and determine the best course of action to make them successful. Be objective with one who can aid you with this. Avoid getting too emotional.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is a fine morning today to study your newspaper and other periodicals for information which can be of assistance for you to make additional income. Later this evening will be good for spending some quality time with your loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You better finish the promises you have made today to others, otherwise you could lose face in their eyes. Handle little tasks this evening which will please your mate and thereby you will gain some additional appreciation.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Talking with fellow associates today can give you a good idea for some new project which has just been handed to you. More action is required this evening in some civic affair which you have taken upon yourself.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take any health treatments today which you may need and you can gain the peace of mind which comes along with them. Become more dynamic and cheerful later this evening thereby and you can have some fun with your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have to make definite arrangements today for recreational plans to be successfu, be kind and considerate towards your loved ones and they will reciprocate the gesture in many ways you cannot count.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

FOR RENT
3 bedrooms apartment in Shmeisani, second floor, 225 sq m.
3 bedrooms in Al Rabia area, third floor, 190 sq m.
Abdoun Real Estate
Tel: 810605 - 810609
Fax: 810520

Happy Days
Patisserie
Soups & Salads Café
OPEN DAILY FROM 10 A.M - 1 A.M
Tel. 857199
Fax 898537
Umm Uthaina behind San Rock Hotel

Sunday, August 4, 199(

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 1996

French urged to be friendlier to foreigners

PARIS (AFP) — French people must learn to smile more at foreigners if they are to maintain France's status as the world's number one tourist destination, an official report has said.

They must also be more prepared to speak foreign languages and be generally more hospitable, according to the study by the Social and Economic Council (CES).

"It is time to make the French understand their role in making up the image of their country," it warned.

France has 60 million visitors per year, bringing in some 57 billion francs ($11.4 billion) or 9.4 per cent of GDP, emplnying some one million people across the country.

But amid a strong franc and a spate nf terrorist attacks, the tourist industry has stagnated over the last four years, ringing alarm bells in the French treasury.

CES rapporteur Fernand Chanssebourg, reporting the results of a survey nf foreigners' views nf visits to France, said that French people were "smug, self-important and not very hospitable."

One key area for improvement is hygeine in public places, which was highlighted as a cause for concern for many foreign visitors, according to the study.

The French authorities are also weak on self-promotion, it said, noting that the country had an annual tourism advertising budget of only 138 million francs ($27 million), two and half times less than Britain, nine times less than Spain and 20 times less than Ireland.

The Disneyland Paris Theme Park east of Paris spends almost as much on promoting itself as the entire French state, it said.

According to a recent study, the number of European tourists visiting France has slumped in the last year, and they are spending less when they get here.

Britons are among the top countries shunning the country, with nearly 10 per cent fewer crossing the English Channel in July than in the same month last year, according to the report by 100 tourifices.

Dubai bets on business boom from Iraq's oil-for-food deal

DUBAI (AFP) — Dubai, the Gulf's trade hub, expects a boom in business when Iraq gets the green light to start buying food and medicine under its oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

Officials and company presidents told AFP that Dubai will play a major role as a way station for goods sent tn Iraq.

"Instead of making orders (elsewhere) and waiting for them, they will be able to take direct delivery nf the goods" from Dubai, said Ahmad Al Banna, director nf research at the Dubai Chamber nf Commerce and Industry.

"Yon find all kinds nf goods in Dubai and at competitive prices. Dubai traders import in large quantities," Mr. Banna said. In 1995, around $20 billion in non-oil goods were imported, exported or reexported from Dubai.

Dubai, one of the seven member states of the United Arab Emirates, "has huge warehouses, ports and an airport allowing it to meet the demands nf neighboring countries," he said.

"In the past there was trade between Iraq and Dubai and these ties will without doubt be reestablished if there is a total or partial lifting of the embargo" imposed on Baghdad after its 1990 invasinn of Knwait, he said.

Iraq has already contacted Dubai about the easing nf the embargn, renting two tug boats from the Dubai-based Mubarak Shipping Company needed to help ships move through the main Iraqi ports at Umm Qasr and Basra.

"The two tugs have arrived in Iraq," according to the company's director, Jumaa Mubarak, who added that his firm was "ready to transport goods to this country when the (oil-for-food) accord is finalised."

He said that Dubai-based transport companies will have a big role to play in shipping goods to Iraq even if the imports come from other cities, since the emirate is the regional hub for the world's freighters.

Dubai and its free zone at Jebel Ali, the largest in the Middle East, serve nther countries in the region with large cargo ships and traditional wooden dhows.

This suits Iraq which "lacks transfer facilities in its ports," which were damaged during the 1991 Gulf war and deprived nf equipment because of the embargo, Mr. Jumaa said.

Iraqi merchants have continued to visit Dubai to buy goods which are exempt from the U.N. embargo.

"They sometimes come to buy $100,000 or $200,000 of sugar and load it on a dhow bound for Iraq after getting approval from the U.N. sanctions surveillance committee office in Bahrain," said Jamal Al Ghurair, president of the Khaleej Sugar Company.

The company's refinery in Jebel Ali produces 2,400 tonnes nf sugar per day, with 60 per cent exported to neighbouring countries.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Jordanian pharmaceutical products to be given priority by Algeria

** ALGERIA HAS decided to support the Jordanian pharmacentical industry by offering more facilities to Jordanian producers. According to Algerian trade Minister Abdul Karim Hashrawi, officials from Jordanian pharmaceutical companies will visit Algeria to assess needs and investments opportunities. The minister said that there are pharmaceutical industries in Algeria that produce medicines needed by Jordan. Mr. Hashrawi described the Jordanian pharmaceutical industry as "advanced in productinn and quality" as well as adhering to internatinnal specifications. He explained that Algeria imports $500 million nf medicines each year from Europe but the priority will now be given to imports from Jordan (Al Aswaq).

Investments reach JD253m during first six months of 1996

** INVESTMENTS DURING the first six months of this year exceed the total recorded for the whole of 1995. According to sources at the Investment Promotion Corporation, 171 new projects benefited from the investment promotion law during the first six months of 1996. Industries accounted for largest portion with 138 projects followed by hotels (25), agriculture (7), hospitals (5) and one project in the maritime and railways sector. The total investment of the project was nearly JD 253 million, 63 per cent of which was for the industrial sector. The percentage of investments in the other sectors were: Hntels (16.8 per cent), agriculture (6.68 per cent), hospitals (7.49 per cent) and the transport sector (0.03 per cent). The foreign share of the total investment amounted to JD51 million or about 20 per cent of the total (Al Dustour).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI

TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 03/08/1996

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	250.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	11.8	1.63	5	500	108330	216.75	215.00	1.75-
	4.700	4.250	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	9.3	3.33	1	2100	9450	4.50	4.50	-
	2.700	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	4.9	6.46	4	3800	8213	5.16	5.16	-
G	5.940	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	11.8	3.14	3	900	3960	4.45	4.40	.05-
	3.040	5.600	JOR.KUWAIT BANK	19.6	0.00	4	153	408	2.70	5.70	-
	1.240	.900	JOR.GULF BANK	5.5	7.83	9	3300	3056	.94	.93	.01-
	4.180	3.300	JOR.ISLAMIC BANK	17.1	0.00	15	5148	18959	3.84	3.56	.05+
4	4.200	1.700	UNION BK.SAV.INV.	P	0.00	8	1800	5131	1.74	1.74	-
	2.670	2.340	BEIT.AL-MAL (BEITNA)	1.8	6.22	5	150	362	2.41	2.41	-
↓	1.090	.290	AMMAN BANK INV.	q	0.00	7	9750	2730	.29	.28	.01-
	1.680	1.000	PHILADEL.INV.BK.	q	0.00	4	1000	1140	1.14	1.15	.01+
	BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 169.44	%CHG: -0.66	59	28817	159788			
	4.410	4.000	JERUSALEM INSUR.	11.4	4.76	3	200	840	4.50	4.20	-
	2.910	2.150	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	6.4	8.89	2	9700	21825	5.23	2.55	.05+
	INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 123.15	%CHG: +0.10	5	9900	22665			
	1.900	1.450	JOR.ELECTRIC PWR.	10.4	5.00	21	13683	20577	1.50	1.60	-
	2.710	2.280	BINER MINERALS	12.0	5.71	1	100	545	2.42	2.46	.03+
	6.050	4.650	ARAB INTL.HOTELS	17.0	3.00	10	10356	61690	4.80	5.00	.20+
	2.850	2.090	SHIPPING LINES	9.3	9.05	1	100	211	2.50	2.21	.01+
	1.270	1.080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	g	0.00	32	11350	12153	1.18	1.16	.03-
	1.410	.960	ZARKA EDUCATION	g	0.00	1	100	100	1.00	1.00	-
	2.430	1.700	UNIFIED CO.	9.9	5.29	7	7700	14639	1.89	1.89	-
N	1.200	.820	UNION LAND DEV.	N	0.00	4	1450	1320	.92	.91	.01-
	SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 112.01	%CHG: -0.56	77	44839	101944			
	27.100	18.950	JOR.TOBACCO & CIG.	20.5	2.96	5	359	9104	54.15	25.36	1.21+
	3.610	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.0	3.18	16	10322	32315	3.12	3.14	.02+
↓	3.550	2.750	JOR.PHOSPHATE MINES	29.2	0.00	4	493	1333	2.77	2.71	.06-
	10.550	8.720	JOR. PETROL.REFINARY	9.3	8.67	20	1164	10711	9.50	9.23	.03+
	8.150	6.420	JOR.WORSTED MILLS	8.8	3.65	1	950	6508	6.85	6.85	-
	5.210	3.100	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	19.3	5.70	93	27039	94037	3.35	3.51	.16+
	8.000	4.250	DAR ALDAWA DV.INV.	12.7	4.30	8	2300	10668	4.50	4.65	.15+
	5.800	3.120	ARAB ALUM.IND.	6.4	5.88	7	1136	3836	3.35	3.38	.03+
	.740	.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0	0.00	48	76200	30654	.50	.52	.02+
	1.500	1.060	ARAB PAPER CONV.TRD.	8.7	8.09	22	14500	18475	1.25	1.28	.03+
	2.720	1.210	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	g	0.00	4	441	576	1.35	1.35	-
	1.210	.660	NATIONAL INDS.	9.9	8.96	1	100	67	.67	.67	-
	1.170	.830	JOR. ROCKWOOL INDS.	P	0.00	5	700	685	.99	.96	.01-
	4.850	2.650	NATL.CABLE WIRE.MFAC	17.7	0.00	2	400	1160	2.00	3.90	.10-
	1.660	.830	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	g	0.00	3	600	534	.99	.69	-
	2.220	1.080	ARAB PHARM.CHEM.	27.7	0.00	57	12750	16920	1.45	1.48	.03+
	1.820	1.250	KAWTHER INVEST.	41.7	6.17	1	550	638	1.16	1.16	.01+
	3.410	1.760	UNIV. MODN.INDS.	5.8	10.42	16	7300	14035	1.91	1.92	.01+
	2.170	1.140	JOR.INDS.RESOURCES	10.0	0.00	20	6475	7167	1.40	1.43	.03+
	1.800	.950	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	37.4	0.00	9	2617	2643	1.02	1.01	.01-
	2.460	1.750	EL -ZAY READY WEAR	P	0.00	2	2400	4615	1.88	1.88	-
	1.490	1.090	INTL. TOBACCO	27.8	0.00	11	6150	7257	1.18	1.18	-
	2.210	1.130	UNION CH. & VEG.	28.8	0.00	5	450	525	1.16	1.17	.01+
	INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 104.07	%CHG: +0.13	332	175398	286358			
	GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 136.50	%CHG: -0.24	473	558954	570755			

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 03/08/1996

	PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
	.840	.510	CENTRAL GEN.STORAGE	55.9	0.00	6	2950	1678	.54	.57	.03+
	.810	.650	JOR.TRADE FAC.	16.6	0.00	3	1000	630	.62	.63	.01+
+N	.950	.470	NATL.COMMER.CENTERS	E	0.00	5	369	179	.47	.46	.01-
	.990	.700	UNION INV. 50%	67.0	0.00	18	66700	13340	.71	.70	.01-
	1.200	.530	ARAB FIN.INVEST.	g	0.00	13	7600	4317	.56	.58	.02+
	.970	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	E	0.00	4	1700	957	.56	.57	.01+
	1.800	1.370	NATL. CHLORINE	E	0.00	7	4200	6006	1.44	1.43	.01-
N	1.100	.620	NATL.MULT.ENG.NAMICO	E	0.00	5	8424	5397	.64	.64	-
	1.080	.770	JORDAN STEEL	E	0.00	6	2250	1750	.80	.79	.01-
↓	.840	.460	ARAB ELECT.INDS.	P	0.00	5	900	405	.46	.45	.01-
	.970	.620	MIDEAST PHARM. 75%	E	0.00	6	7250	2614	.63	.63	-
	1.710	1.100	UNION TOBACCO 75%	E	0.00	3	617	584	1.14	1.15	.01+
	.880	.440	INDS. ENG.	35.1	0.00	37	58150	15985	.55	.57	.02+
	1.460	.770	INDS. CERAMIC	E	0.00	5	1250	988	.79	.75	-
↓	.970	.650	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	5	10000	6450	.65	.64	.01-
N	1.800	.830	MID.EAST COMPLEX	8.4	0.00	61	58650	50559	.75	.72	.03-
N	5.500	3.900	ARAB STEEL PIPES	10.6	6.41	1	1000	3900	3.99	3.90	.09-
	GRAND TOTAL					185	513140	115636			

↓ : New 12 months low
S : Stock dividend during the past 12 months
N : Listed during the past 12 months
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more
g : Negative P/E
E : Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates — Prices as at 3/08/96 18:45

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.4775	0.6485	1.2005	106.80	1.3740	1516.00	1.6567	5.0140
DE Mark	0.6768	-	0.4386	0.8126	[illegible]	[illegible]	1026.71	[illegible]	3.3931
GB Sterling	1.5420	1.5420	-	1.8581	164.75	2.1187	2337.67	2.5546	7.7316
CH Franc	0.8330	122.97	[illegible]	[illegible]	88.94	1.1444	1261.71	[illegible]	4.1731
JP Yen	0.0094	1.3821	0.6063	1.1230	-	1.2862	14.18	154.98	4.6904
CA Dollar	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1112.80	[illegible]	3.6620
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9745	0.4274	0.0792	1420.86	0.9066	-	10.93	3.3070
NL Guilder	0.6036	89.16	0.3913	72.44	64.41	0.8297	814.80	-	3.0256
FR Franc	0.1994	0.2946	0.1292	23.9382	21.28	0.2742	33.03	33.0300	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	20.40	20.05
W.Texas	21.30	20.90
Bony	20.40	20.05
Dubai	17.90	17.60
UL Gas	196.00	196.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.3941	0.17282	0.32037	28.5038
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.40251	0.17661	0.3272	29.1121
KW Dinar	3.3456	4.9456	2.16967	4.01929	357.654
BH Dinar	2.6779	3.92003	1.72028	3.18674	283.572
CY Pound	2.1686	3.2041	1.4054	2.6034	231.607

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	386.75	387.25
Silver (oz's)	[illegible]	[illegible]
Platinum (oz's)	402.3	403.3
AL (3 Months)	1510	1513
CU (3 Months)	1935	1940
Zinc (3 Months)	1030	1035
Lead (3 Months)	800	805
NI (3 Months)	6970	6990

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period / C'ncy	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year
USD	5.31	5.43	5.62	5.78	5.93
GBP	5.88	5.88	5.88	5.90	5.90
JPY	0.37	0.71	0.75	0.78	0.93
DEM	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.25	3.31
FRF	3.56	3.65	3.75	3.83	3.92
CHF	2.21	2.31	2.26	2.43	2.43
ITL	8.56	8.40	8.28	8.21	8.12

Main Equity Indicies

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls
NewYork	DOW JONES	5679.83	85.08	1.52	5679.83	5592.54	5594.75
Newyork	S&P 500	662.49	12.47	1.92	662.49	650.02	650.02
London	FT-SE 100	3770.6	36.2	0.97	3770.7	3734.1	3734.4
Tokyo	NIKKIE 225	20940.41	-44.42	-0.21	21148.3	20940.4	20984.8
Paris	CAC 40	2023.41	13.51	0.67	2030.77	2010.95	2009.9
Frankfort	DAX	2506.65	14.19	0.57	2511	2505.64	2492.46

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Commodity	Last	Delivery
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Cocoa ($/ton)	1395	Spot
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* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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Carl Lewis could miss 10th gold

ATLANTA (R) — Carl Lewis's chances of crowning his career and the troubled Olympics with a unique 10th gold medal hung in the balance Friday and Nigerian long jumper Chioma Ajunwa scored one of the biggest upsets of the games.

Exactly a week after a crude pipe bomb blasted a vicious shrapnel of screws and nails through crowds attending a rock concert in Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park, it was briefly evacuated because of a suspicious package. Police said it turned out to be a false alarm.

Hundreds of relatives, friends and officials attended funeral services for Alice Hawthorne, 44, who died in the park bomb blast after being hit by shrapnel. A Turkish cameraman also died and 110 people were hurt.

There was still no sign of arrests or charges in the bombing, despite searches of current and former homes of a private security guard who is the only known suspect.

In the long jump, Ajunwa came back from a four-year ban for doping to give Nigeria its first ever gold, less than two months after returning to competition.

She took the scalps of former Olympic champion Jackie Joyner-Kersee and world champion Fiona May.

Kenya continued its 12-year domination of the 3,000 metres steeplechase but in surprise fashion, when Joseph Keter beat world record holder and champion Moses Kiptanui.

There was a shock in the tennis too where American Lindsay Davenport upset world number three Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the women's final.

Great athletics performances could erase much of the memory of the problems that have dogged the Olympics and after Michael Johnson's breathtaking 200 metres world record, a 10th gold medal for Carl Lewis would give the games a glamorous finale.

American coaches said they were keeping their options open on whether to include Lewis in the team for the 4x100 metres relay final Saturday and give him a chance of an unprecedented 10th gold.

But asked if Lewis should be included, team captain Dennis Mitchell replied: "I don't think at this point we need him."

Services for bomb victim Hawthorne were held in Albany, south of Atlanta where she lived, and Douglasville, where she grew up.

In Douglasville, the preacher led prayers for the victim of the bomber and in Albany a letter was read from President Bill Clinton vowing to catch the bombers.

The Albany service was attended by Hawthorne's 14-year-old daughter Fallon who was injured in the blast.

Johnson, whose astonishing performance in the 200 metres Thursday was the defining moment of the Olympics, withdrew from the 4x400 metres relay after straining his right hamstring, losing his chance of a third gold after the unique 200 and 400 double.

The U.S. 400 relay team went on in the semifinal to clock the fastest time run in the United States and looked set for gold.

Germany's soling crew, skippered by veteran Jochen Schuemann, captured the final gold of the Olympic yachting regatta.

But in another brickbat against the organisers, yachting's governing body, the International Yacht Racing Union (IYRU) slammed Olympic officials for staging the events at Wassaw Sound near Savannah. The inaccessible location was a logistical nightmare for competitors, spectators and the media.

Chioma Ajunwa of Nigeria is shown as she competes in the finals of the women's long jump competition, winning the gold medal on Aug. 2 at the Olympic stadium in Atlanta. The gold is the first Olympics long jump title for Nigeria (Reuter photo)

Joseph Keter of Kenya celebrates as he crosses the finish line after winning the gold medal in the men's 3,000-metre steeplechase event on Aug. 2 at the Olympic stadium in Atlanta (Reuter photo)

Olympics schedule

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4

ATHLETICS

Men's marathon

BASKETBALL

Women's gold and bronze medal

BOXING

Flyweight, featherweight, light welterweight, light middleweight, light heavyweight, super heavyweight finals

CANOE-KAYAK

500 finals
Men's kayak and canoe single and double, Women's kayak single and double

EQUESTRIAN

Individual jumping, semifinals and finals

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

Individual finals

TEAM HANDBALL

Men's gold and bronze medal match

VOLLEYBALL

Men's gold and bronze medal match

Boys from the hood find it tough going against Cuban machine

ATLANTA (AFP) — In the end the raw talent of the boys from the hood wasn't enough to match it with the Cuban boxing machine at the Olympics.

Years of professional poaching have emptied the reserves of once bountiful amateur talent that the United States could by right call upon.

The U.S. may have the most Olympic gold with 46 going into the Atlanta tournament, but since the fabulous seven-gold medal haul at Los Angeles in 1984, the Americans have won just four golds going into the Atlanta finals.

Cuba, even after boycotting the 1984 and 1988 Seoul Games, have 13 golds at their last two Olympic competitions, six in Moscow in 1980 and seven at the last Barcelona Games. They have 19 in total.

By any measure the gap between the Caribbean powerhouses and the U.S. has widened, if gauged by performances leading up to the Atlanta finals.

The gulf was underlined when one of American featherweight Floyd Mayweather shaded Lorenzo Aragon 12-11 on points in the quarter-finals.

Nineteen year old Mayweather's win was the first by a U.S. boxer over a Cuban opponent since Leon Spinks stopped Sixto Soria in the light heavyweight final at the 1976 Montreal Games

Cuba, who take ideological glee in beating Americans in the ring, especially by knockout, have won 13 of 19 bouts against the U.S.

The Americans may talk up a good fight, while the Cubans shun publicity, but in essence the substance was not there for head coach Al Mitchell and his group of minority miscreants.

Much was made before the Olympics of the dubious character references of Mitchell's troupe and the refusal of host broadcaster NBC to consign boxing coverage to delayed highlights screened in the early hours of the morning in deference to its female audience.

That seemed incongruous given the parallels of American boxing icons, Mohammad Ali and Evander Holyfield's presence at the Atlanta opening ceremony, indeed the ailing Mohammad Ali was deemed the American athlete considered appropriate enough to light the Olympic flame.

Discipline was always going to be a handful for taskmaster Mitchell.

The boxers' backgrounds symbolise the endemic modern-day pressures of crime-ridden U.S. big city life.

Super heavyweight Lawrence Clay-Bey, a warder, has been accused of sexual assault, heavyweight Nate Jones has spent time for armed robbery, light-heavyweight Antonio Tarver is a reformed crack addict, light middleweight David Reid had allegations of assault dropped by his girlfriend just before the games and Floyd Mayweather's father is inside convicted of cocaine trafficking.

Mitchell has always worked under the spectre of promoters sitting ringside ready to plunder more of his young team and further diminishing the pool of amateur talent.

He has had motivational problems with several of his youngsters; on one occasion enraged assistant coach Jesse Ravelo punched a hole in a wall trying to get world champion Tarver, distracted by outside interests, to focus on the job at hand.

Other boxers have disregarded advice from their corner and paid the price in points decisions and the sporting behaviour of some of the beaten Americans has left a lot to be desired in comparison with other nations, significantly Cuba.

Those who said the Cubans were too old were off beam — Felix Savon, Ariel Hernandez, Hector Vinent and Juan Hernandez, are still winning and the team has shown little instability even following the defection of Olympic champion Joel Casamayor and world champion Ramon Garbey before the Olympics.

The computer scoring system, adopted at the Barcelona Olympics in a search for equitable results, has annoyed boxers and fans alike with those adept at manipulating the computer with jabs and straight punches preferred to the more popular all-action fighters.

When Tongan super heavyweight Paea Wolfgram upset the odds with a pulsating win over Cuban Rubalcaba Alexis in the quarter-finals he became an instant hero, with the Americans shouting 'Tonga, Tonga.'

It's a shame when Wolfgram's refreshing natural performance is the exception rather than the rule in the controlled world of amateur boxing.

Atlanta clutter draws comparison with L.A.

ATLANTA (R) — Eccentric Californians staged the nihilist games in Los Angeles 12 years ago because they felt the real Olympics were getting too serious.

The souvenir T-shirt depicted an athlete putting the shot — but the shot had a smoking fuse.

It seemed funny at the time, but the Olympic joke went sour last week when a real bomb in Atlanta's Centennial Park left two dead and over 100 injured.

The bombing drew inevitable comparisons with the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre in which 11 Israeli athletes were murdered by Palestinian guerrillas.

But in most other respects the general style of the Atlanta Games bears much closer resemblance to the commercial bype and vulgarity of the Los Angeles Olympics.

The dollar bill reigns supreme in Atlanta as it did in Los Angeles.

The 1984 nihilist games also staged a marathon over a distance of one yard (metre) because it seemed silly to run further.

That also carried an echo from the 1972 Olympics in which an imposter "won" the marathon and then said he had devised the hoax because the games had become too serious.

When Atlanta was bidding for the games it knew the mandarins of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had been less than thrilled at the extent to which Los Angeles — the only candidate for 1984 after the costly mistakes of Montreal in 1976 — had had them over a barrel.

Fearing it might be tarred with the Los Angeles brush, Atlanta deliberately set out to create the impression that the city was somehow separate from the rest of the United States.

But instead of the seductive southern charm they had been led to expect, visitors to the Georgia capital have been wading knee deep in the "commercial clutter" which has drawn frowns of disapproval from the IOC.

Paradoxically, the Olympic Park bombing has done much to subdue earlier criticism of Atlanta's lackadaisical transport and dysfunctional technology.

In the face of death, it seemed churlish to moan about late buses and hiccuping computers.

After the bombing, Atlantans quickly got their show back on the road and earned virtually universal acclaim for their strength of purpose.

By contrast, the 1972 killings resulted in recriminations against the police who, some claimed, had helped precipitate Israeli deaths in a gun battle at a military airport outside Munich after sharpshooters killed three of the Palestinian guerrillas.

But the biggest contrast of all concerns the style of Atlanta itself by comparison with Barcelona, the Olympic hosts four years ago.

Atlanta knew it could never measure up to the beauty, flair and vivacity of the Catalan capital. Few cities could. Instead, it set out to offer a modern, efficient games and demonstrate the best of southern culture.

Rampant commercialism and technological failures have largely distorted that goal.

But as the games entered their closing phase it seemed likely that outstanding sporting memories and abiding sympathy for the victims of the bomb would rescue Atlanta's image in the eyes of the world.

JTV's Olympic coverage on Channel 2 for Sunday

Athletics men's marathon	13:55 - 17:15
Canoeing finals	15:55 - 18:15
Equestrian finals	16:55 - 19:30
Handball men's final	19:50 - 21:20
Rhythmic gymnastics	19:55 - 22:15
Boxing finals	20:25 - 23:00
Equestrian ind. jump	20:55 - 22:45
Volleyball men's final	21:20 - 23:45
Basketball ladies final	01:25 - 03:40
Closing ceremony	03:55 - 06:59

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Toy Story
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U.S. win synchronised swimming team gold

ATLANTA (R) — The United States, scoring a battery of perfect 10s in their free routine, won the synchronised swimming team title Friday.

The Americans scored five 10s out five for technical merit and four 10s and a 9.9 from the Swiss judge for artistic impression, computed to a maximum 100 points with top and bottom scores deducted.

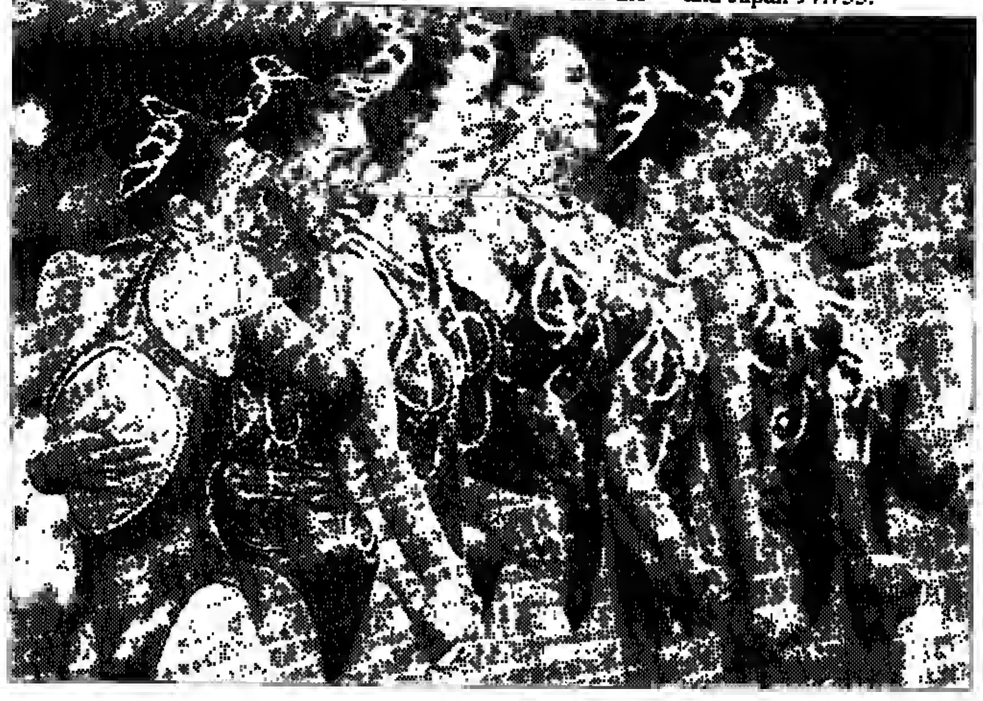
The U.S. had also finished first in Tuesday's technical programme and swept the first Olympic synchro team title by a comfortable margin, their victory never in doubt and a source of rapture to home fans at the Georgia Tech pool.

Canada took the silver and Japan the bronze in a repeat of the medal order of the last two world championships.

The solo and duet events, which formed the Olympic synchro programme at the last three games, were dropped for Atlanta and the team event brought in. The Americans have won the world championship team title five times out of seven.

The Americans, who included 1994 world solo champion Becky Dyroen-Lancer in their eight-woman team, amassed 99.720 points in the final classification, which combines 35 per cent of the technical programme marks and 65 per cent of the free routine.

Canada scored 98.367 and Japan 97.753.



Members of USA's synchronised swim team react as they learn that they won the gold medal with a score of 99.722 on Aug. 2 during the Atlanta Centennial Olympic Games (Reuter photo)

France caused a furore in the run-up to the games with a free routine based on the Nazi holocaust which French Sports Minister Guy Drut forced them to abandon.

They substituted a different score, including original music which Jean-Michel Collet spent 15 days and nights composing, according to team officials.

A psycbologist was brought in to work with the swimmers, who had to master technical changes in their routine just a few weeks before the Olympics began.

The French octet finished fifth, one place behind Russia.

The U.S. free routine included music by Benjamin Britton, Antonio Vivaldi and Claude Debussy and a finale of American traditional fare, Yankee Doodle and America The Beautiful.

Canada's team featured Sylvie Frechette, at 29 the oldest competitor, who was belatedly awarded 1992 Olympic solo gold to match that of her American rival following a mix-up over the marking in Barcelona which had made her second.

The U.S. and Canada have won all the Olympic golds and silvers between them. Japan has taken all the bronzes.

The Canadian synchronised swim team performs on Aug. 2 in the Georgia Tech pool during the Olympic Summer Games in Atlanta. Canada scored 98.36 and won the silver medal behind the U.S. (Reuter photo)

Flops and failures tumble into the Olympic chasm

ATLANTA (AFP) — Measured in mico-seconds, the gap between winning and losing might not look so wide.

But the yawning chasm of defeat in Atlanta has swallowed thousands of high hopes and dreams.

Judging by the tears and heartbreak, taking part is not as much fun as Baron Pierre de Couberton claimed when he created the modern Olympics 100 years ago.

But the defeated can still leave their mark, if only measured by the magnitude of their failure.

Take Linford Christie. The defending champion disqualified for two false starts in the men's 100m was so startling that Donovan Bailey of Canada had to win the race by a world record to get any attention at all.

Legions of stars followed Christie to defeat. Sonia O'Sullivan of Ireland, the world's top women 5000m runner, lost two possible golds to a bad stomach, while Sergei Bubka, the polevault legend, never jumped because of a bad ankle.

Hassiba Boulmerka of Algeria, the world and Olympic champion, tripped up in her heat and failed to reach the final. Others like Marlene Ottey of Jamaica, came second. The greatest woman sprinter never to have won an Olympic title, Ottey lost the 100m sprint on a photo finish to Gail Devers of the United States and the 200m gold to French runner Marie Jose Perec.

"I admire Merlene so much and it bothered me that I had beaten her," said the French 400m specialist who did the 200-400m double.

It also bothered the Brazilians that Nigeria had knocked them out of the Olympic soccer tournament. Brazil, the greatest footballing nation in the world, lost in the semi-finals and police are searching for sombody who was so upset he firebombed the Nigerian embassy in Brasilia.

In shooting, world champion Wang Yifu of China had the gold medal in his grasp. He misfired on his final shot in 10m pistol, then staggered by heat and heartache, he fainted.

Petra Horneber of Germany threw away the gold medal with her very last shot in the women's rifle. She led throughout the competition then found victory more impossible to handle than defeat. She said "my nerve cracked."

Vitaly Scherbo, heralded as one of the greatest gymnastics ever seen, left Atlanta white with rage. He won six Olympic gold medals in Barcelona four years ago, but won just three bronze medals here. He was unable to accept the truth.

The 24-year-old from Belarus, who now lives in the United States, is no longer that good. He deprived his team of the bronze team medal when he fell off the pommel horse. He blamed the judges for his misfortunes.

Badminton's Indonesia's stars were denied by Poul-Erik Hoyer-Larsen of Denmark. He accounted for defending champion Allan Budi Kusuma and world champion Heryanto Arbi on his way to the men's title.

A broken racket took care of Susi Susanti, the most successful women of modern times. She lost her title when she was beaten in the semis by Bang Soo-Hyun of South Korea. She had to replace her rackuet early on and never recovered.

In weightlifting Belarus former Olympic champion Leonid Taranenko put his back out in the warm up minutes before the competition for the super heavyweight title and could not even lift his kit bag.

Marcus Stephen, the 1990 and 1994 Commonwealth champion from the tiny central Pacific island of Nauru, left without making one lift. He failed three times to snatch 120 kilogrammes and crashed out of the competition.

China's swimmers flopped. The team that swept 12 of the 16 gold medals at the world championships in 1994 only managed one here. In the intervening two years Chinese swimming bas been turned upside down following revelations of widespread doping. In Atlanta only Le Jingyi won a gold in the 100m freestyle while 100m backstroke world record holder He Cihong failed to qualify.

IOC vice-president's wife has a brush with the law

ATLANTA (R) — The wife of International Olympic Committee (IOC) Vice-President Dick Pound made a brief appearance before an Atlanta court Friday following a street altercation in which a policewoman was kneed in the groin.

Julie Pound, a 56-year-old Canadian, was ordered to appear for a formal hearing on Aug. 26 on charges including simple battery, obstruction and using abusive language.

She left the courtroom immediately afterwards without uttering a word. Her husband, a swimming finalist for Canada in the 1960 Rome Olympics who now sits on the IOC's ruling Executive Board, was not present.

The charges stem from an incident early Wednesday morning when Mrs. Pound and her husband tried to cross a busy downtown street against the instructions of traffic policewoman Leanne Browning.

Ms. Browning's arrest report said Mrs. Pound had the "odour of alcohol on her breath and continued to act irrationally." It said Mrs. Pound had used foul language on her when she was asked four times to stay on the sidewalk.

When the officer finally grabbed Mrs. Pound's arm to put her under arrest, the woman allegedly responded by kneeing her in the groin. Both the officer and Mrs. Pound suffered minor injuries in the scuffle.

Atlanta says 'bye y'all' to the Olympic Games

ATLANTA (R) — Without a trace of self-doubt, Atlanta promised the "best games in history." On Sunday, it finds out exactly how close it got.

In a raucous and rocking closing ceremony, the city will holler a Georgia-style "bye y'all" to the centenary Olympic Games and to the athletes who brought it to life.

And Juan Antonio Samaranch, like a Roman emperor at the coliseum, will deliver his verdict.

These have been the biggest games ever, the brashest, certainly among the most dramatic. Nothing so big has hit the American south since the civil war.

But have they been the best? Only International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Samaranch, keeper of the tradiional closing-night accolade, will be able to bestow that honour.

The crowds have been enormous — more people have attended sporting events than at the last two summer Olympics combined.

But Atlanta's overall Olympic experience has been, at best, bitter-sweet and Samaranch is unlikely to pretend otherwise.

There were the glitches: Rowing competitors had to hijack a bus to get to their venues on time, a costly computer results system failed to deliver the goods IOC officials complained of commercial "clutter" marring the look of the games.

Then tragedy struck in Centennial Olympic Park when a crude pipe bomb spewed screws and nails at a crowd of revellers in the heart of the brash Olympic street party.

Two people died and 110 were injured in what President Bill Clinton branded an "evil act of terror."

All agreed the show must go on, however, and it did. Atlanta hauled the games back on track.

By tradition, closing ceremonies are always less formal than the show that marks the start of 16 days of competition. Each of the 197 teams will send only six people into the athletes' parade so there should be none of the interminable march-pasts that delayed the lighting of the Olympic flame on July 19.

The American flag will be raised alongside that of Greece. The Australian city of Sydney, which host's the next summer games in 2000, will be handed the Olympic flag.

Beyond that, the show's details are being kept secret. President Clinton was not planning to come.

At the end of the night, whatever Samaranch says, the people of Atlanta will go to bed sure that they gave the world the best Olympic games in history.

Iranian leader: Wrestling victory humilates U.S.

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's president on Saturday hailed an Iranian wrestler who won a gold medal at the Olympics in Atlanta, saying he had rubbed the United States' nose in the dirt.

"The flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran was raised in the house of Satan through the resolve of a pious youth, Rasull Khadem, despite all the mischief by the Americans to prevent this historic event in Atlanta," Rafsanjani said in a speech broadcast by Iranian Radio.

He praised the victory by light-heavyweight Rasull Khadem Azghadi on Friday as a message from God to the world's despots.

"I congratulate your excellence and our nation for rubbing the nose of America in the dirt and for beating the nine-medalled Russian champion. Victory against two superpowers in a single exhibition," he said.

The speech was monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Tehran's hostile relations with Washington have grown more tense following comments by U.S Defence Secretary William Perry on Friday that Iran was a leading suspect in the bombing of a U.S. military facility in Saudi Arabia in June.

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The UNDP Resident Representative in Jordan, Mr. Jorgen Lissner, regrets to announce that the official launch of UNDP's 1996 Human Development Report, originally scheduled to take place at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 4, 1996 under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma, has been postponed.
It will be held instead on Monday August 26, 1996 at 11:00 a.m. at Regency Palace Hotel.
Any inconvenience caused by this change is sincerely regretted.

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Fateh leaders to meet in Cairo on peace process

CAIRO (AP) — Leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) biggest faction, Yasser Arafat's Fateh movement, will meet in Cairo next week to review the stalled peace process with Israel, a PLO official said Saturday.

Mohammad Soheih, the PLO envoy to the Arah League, said the 17-member Fateh Central Committee hopes to forge a plan to respond to challenges raised hy Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's policies towards the peace process.

He said topping the agenda will be "the series of violations of the (peace) agreements hy the new Israeli government," including the closure of Palestinian territories and decision to renew settlement building in the West Bank.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said, meanwhile, that President Hosni Mubarak would raise the issue of settlements with Mr. Netanyahu. Mr. Musa said after a cabinet meeting Saturday that the Israeli decision was "a dangerous move" for the peace process.

Fateh, the strongest group in the Palestinian territories, is the mainstream faction of the PLO. It's central committee has great influence on both the PLO and Mr. Arafat's Gaza-hased Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Since Mr. Arafat launched his self-rule administration under a 1993 accord with Israel, the committee has held several meetings in the Gaza Strip. But three members who have not moved to the territories were unable to attend these gatherings.

The Cairo meeting was apparently designed to hring these leaders — including Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department — back into the decision-making process and to show Mr. Arafat's ahility to manoeuvre against Israel's pressures.

On Friday, Mr. Netanyahu's cabinet decided to ease restrictions on construction of settlements, which the previous government adopted to pave the way for peace talks. The move angered Palestinians, who complained it violated the peace agreements.

Other sources said that the meeting was also prnmpted hy recent violence in the territories between Palestinians and PNA security forces.

In the West Bank town of Tulkarem, a Palestinian was killed Friday during a protest over the death of a detainee severely beaten hy the security forces in neighbouring Nablus. The prisoner, Mahmoud Jemayel, was a Fateh activist in the anti-Israeli uprising and his death angered many of his colleagues.

Friday's protest against the PNA was one of the most serious challenges to Mr. Arafat's rule since the start of his self-rule government.

The Cairo meeting will discuss ways to calm down outrage within Fateh sparkled hy Jemayel's death, said the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Armed Palestinian police arrest a Palestinian for unknown reasons after an argument in front of Tulkarem prison on Saturday. On Friday, the prison witnessed violent clashes between police and abont 2,000 demonstrators demanding the release of Hamas activists. One civilian was killed and seven injured hy Palestinian police (Reuters photo)

Sudan orders mobilisation on border with Eritrea

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan has declared mohilisation in eastern areas on the border with Eritrea for fear of further attacks by dissidents operating in the neighbouring country, a government daily reported Saturday.

Mahmoud Abdeen, the governor of Gedarif province, described the move as "a state of readiness to face any threats coming from Sudan's eastern neighbours," the official daily Al Sudan Al Hadith said.

"The province is currently *living in a state of full and* strong popular mohilisation. It is in full readiness to face any threats or dangers on our eastern front," he was quoted as saying.

Last month rebels belonging to the newly created National Democratic Alliance killed two soldiers in attacks on army positions near the eastern border.

The alliance, which groups both southern rebels and disgruntled northerners, has vowed to remove the Islamic fundamentalist government led hy President Omar Al Bashir.

Sudan has been torn hy a 13-year civil war waged by southern rebels, mostly Christians and members of African trihal faiths, who demand *more* autonomy from the Arah-dominated government in Khartoum.

Sudan and Eritrea have accused each other of harhouring opposition groups trying to topple the regimes in Khartoum and Asmara.

Threat of floods

Irrigation officials have warned Sudanese living along the River Nile to take precautions against flooding since the river is expected to reach unprecedented levels this month.

The undersecretary of irrigation, Osman Al-Toum, was quoted in Saturday's government daily Al Iingaz Al Ingaz as saying monitoring of river levels dating to 1912 show "*this year will see a high and* unprecedented river Nile flood."

"The second half of August is expected to see a high level of flood water that could cause material damage," he said.

Sudan has had two devastating Nile floods, in 1946 and 1988, which caused tremendous damage to farms and residential areas.

Dr. Toum said the Blue Nile, the tributary that carries the bulk of the Nile's flood water, had a flow of 500,000 cubic metres at Eddaim on the border with Ethiopia. He added he expects this flow to reach 800,000 cubic metres towards the end of August.

The Nile's two branches, the Blue and the White, converge in the capital Khartoum. The high water levels are not expected to affect Egypt since the Nile's flow upriver is controlled by the Aswan high dam.

Afghan government ready for talks with Taleban

KABUL (R) — Prime Minister Gulhuddin Hekmatyar said on Saturday his government wanted talks with the rebel Talehan militia on how to restore peace to Afghanistan.

Mr. Hekmatyar, who took up his post as head of what he called an interim government in June, told a news conference contacts with other Afghan opposition factions were already under way.

"We are ready for unconditional talks with the Taleban, either direct or indirect, on any level, anywhere," he said.

Mr. Hekmatyar was himself once one of President Burhannudin Rabbani's hitterest foes in the factional fighting that has cost an estimated 40,000 lives and wrecked much of Kahul since guerrillas ousted a communist government in 1992.

He said other factions, including those led hy northern militia chief General Ahdul Rashid Dostum and the Shi'ite Muslim Hezb-I-Wahdat of Karim Khalili, had responded positively to Kahul's efforts to persuade them to join the government.

Earlier this year the Talehan rebuffed Mr. Rabhani's offer to travel to rebel-held territory for peace talks.

Mr. Hekmatyar's latest prnposal follows a visit to Kahul this week hy the new U.N. special envhy to Afghanistan, Norbert Holl, who is on an introductory round of talks with rival leaders.

Mr. Holl, who plans to visit Talehan headquarters in the southern city of Kandahar on Monday, criticised the Islamic militia for shelling Kahul during his visit.

Mr. Hekmatyar said he had asked boll to come up with a peace plan of his own to serve as a hasis for negotiations.

"We have told Mr. Holl to draw up a peace plan. It is better to have one from the very start. Mr. Holl's predecessor, (Mahmoud) Mestiri, failed in his two-year mission because from the very beginning to the end he was saying he had no plan. We will accept any logical and practical plan," Mr. Hekmatyar added.

The government's own peace formula calls for a ceasefire, negotiation, an interim government, demilitarisation of cities and elections.

"If a formula such as this is accepted hy the Talehan, we will accept it without any condition," Mr. Hekmatyar said.

Mr. Holl's visit to Gen. Dostum in the north on Thursday coincided with clashes between forces loyal to Rahhani and Gen. Dostum.

COLUMN 8

Roman coins found in Chinese tomb

BEIJING (AFP) — Four *Roman coins* dating to the early Byzantine Empire some 1,500 years ago have heen unearthed from a Chinese tomh, Xinhua reported Friday. The gold coins were discovered during excavations of a tomb belonging to the Northern Dynasties (386 A.D). to 581 A.D. in northwest China's Ningxia province. "The four gold coins are the first of their kind to be found in China. They reflect a long history of cultural exchan-ges between ancient China and Rome," said Luo Feng, deputy director of the Guyuan Museum in Ningxia. The Roman Empire was divided hy the Emperor Diocletian in 293 A.D. along the Balkans, with an Eastern Emperor and officials coexisting alongside their Western counterparts. Constantinople, previously Byzantium, now Istanhul, was inaugurated as the "new Rome" in 330 A.D. The Eastern Empire survived until the fall of Constantinople to the Otterman Turks in 1453, almost 1,000 years after the Western Roman Empire disappeared.

Race row boy finds cat's head in schoolbag

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — A hlack high school pupil who was recently reinstated after being expelled for touching a white girl's hreast, found a cat's head in his schoolhag, the Johanneshurg Star said Saturday. Edwin Letsela, 13, was in May expelled from Ben Viljoen High School, in conservative Groblersdal farming town east of here, after the girl claimed he had touched her breast. White parents in the area reacted with anger over the incident and demanded the school take action. Letsela claimed he was pushed and had accidently touched the girl's hreast. He was reinstated last week after the government of Mpumalanga province said the punishment did not fit the alleged offence. The report said that on Wednesday, Letsela and his parents laid a charge of intimidation at the local police station after the boy found a severed head of a cat in his hag. The charge was later withdrawn, the report said, without giving reasons.

Chinese villager forks out for fatal attraction

BEIJING (AFP) — A villager paid out 5,800 yuan ($700) to acquire the body of a newly-deceased girl in order to "marry" her to his dead son, The Shandong legal daily reported in its latest edition received here Wednesday. The incident happened in the village of Shaanxi, central China, the eastern daily reported. "No sooner had the 18-year-old girl expired than intermediaries rushed to her home to put forward possible husbands for a posthumous marriage, offering from 1,000 to 3,800 yuan according to the cadaver," it said. "In the event, a wealthy local man shelled out 5,800 yuan and took her body off to wed her in the afterlife with his son, who had died at the age of five." The paper hit out at such "feudal superstitions," bnt disclosed that in this region alone there were around two dozen similar cases each year. Posthumous weddings, *according to* ancient Chinese belief, prevent the bride and groom from becoming ghosts. Ruinously costly weddings are a rnutine target for the Chinese official media.

Israeli envoy discusses Jewish settlements

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — An Israeli envoy held talks here Friday during which plans for possible expansion of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were raised, the State Department said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's political adviser, Dore Gold, met with the State Department's Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross and his deputies, spokesman Nicholas Burns said."They had good discussions," he commented.

The meeting in Washington came as the Israeli government lifted some of the restrictions on expanding Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories, effectively reversing a partial freeze imposed four years ago.

Mr. Burns described the Israeli decision as "complex" and noted that "there was no decision made by the Israeli cahinet ... to specifically expand the number of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

That decision would have to be taken hy a special vote of the cahinet, Mr. Burns noted.

Mr. Gold's visit also coincided with efforts to jumpstart the Israeli-Syrian peace track that has been deadlocked since a wave of suicide bombings shook Israel in February.

To unlock the stalemate, Mr. Netanyahu has put forward a "Lebanon-first" option that would provide for an Israeli withdrawal from Lehanon where Syria also has troops.

Syria has publicly refused such an approach and again called Thursday for the return of Arab land, including the strategic Golan Heights seized by Israel in 1967, in exchange for peace.

But there have been recent reports of secret meetings between Mr. Netanyahu and a Syrian envoy to discuss the proposal.

The State Department spokesman declined to comment on those reports but indicated that the prnposal could meet with U.S. apprnval.

"We'd like to see Israel reach a peace agreement with Lebanon and with Syria," Mr. Burns said."

And ultimately we all believe that the territorial integrity of Lebanon is very important, that the future withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon is important at some point in the future," he said.

Jewish settler leaders have dusted off ambitious building plans after Mr. Netanyahu's government lifted a four-year-old curb on construction in their disputed communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Infrastructures Minister Ariel Sharon, a patron of the settlers, was quoted as saying by Israel TV that settlements would be expanded considerably and eventually linked together.

Palestinian leaders and Israeli peace activists said the message was clear: Israel planned to tighten its grip on the West Bank and thwart any land-for-peace deal with the Palestinians.

The cabinet voted unanimously Friday to lift the building restrictions that had heen imposed hy Yitzhak Rabin four years ago to pave the way for peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

"This is the end to the artificial drying out...of the, settlements," Mr. Netanyahu said after the meeting. "The previous government placed all kinds of restrictions and shackles on the natural developments of the settlements."

"Today, we gave ourselves some room to manoeuvre."

Mr. Netanyahu has said he expected his government would increase the number of Jewish settlers — now 145,000 — hy at least 50 per cent.

The cabinet did not authorise specific building projects.

It said construction plans would have to be approved by the defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, a close ally of Mr. Netanyahu, and would have to stay within the limits of the state budget.

Plans for new settlements would have to be approved by the full cabinet, the decision said.

'Rumours of de Charette attack were pure fantasy'

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The Algerian authorities on Saturday described as "pure fantasy" a claim in the Arabic daily Al Hayat that two bombs had been discovered at Algiers airport on Wednesday shortly before the arrival of French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette.

The official news agency, quoting "authorised" sources at the Interior Ministry, denied "in the most categorical fashion these allegations which are a matter of pure fantasy and malevolent disinformation."

Al Hayat published a short article on its front page under the headline: "Bomb attempt targeting Mr. Charette at Algiers?"

The paper, citing "informed sources," said the airport director Houari Boumediene had received a call, warning that a bomh had been planted in the gardens outside the airport entrance. "After detailed searches, the security services found two bombs; one near the runway where Mr. Charette's plane touched down, and the other in the garden," the paper claimed.

Al Hayat, which is distributed in several Arah and Western capitals, said that the Algerian authorities had opened an inquiry.

In Paris, Mr. de Charette told AFP that he had "no comment to make on the newspaper report."

Meanwhile, the United States condemned Friday the killing of a Roman Catholic hishop in Algeria and stressed his death resulted from an act of terrorism.

Pierre Claverie, the hishop of Oran, was killed by a bomh at his palace in the western Algerian city. His death came hours after he met Mr. de Charette.

"Once again we must condemn terrorism in Algeria and must give our profound sympathy to the church, to the families of the victims, and to everyone associated with the cause of stability in Algeria," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said.

"We condemn this in the strongest possible terms," he added.

Mr. Claverie was one of Algeria's most prominent churchmen, renowned for *his frankness* and hostility to the Islamic fundamentalist movement which has been trying to overthrow the government since 1992.

Italy called the killing of the hishop an act of senseless harbarity and said political dialogue was the only way Algeria could achieve peace. A foreign ministry statement said in Rome the murder of Bishop Claverie had caused horror and consternation.

Kuwait's stateless Arabs face slim chance of citizenship

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Only two per cent of the estimated 120,000 stateless Arabs living in Kuwait are likely to receive Kuwaiti citizenship, the interior minister said in an interview published on Saturday.

The authorities have divided the 120,000 stateless Arahs — called "bidoon" meaning "without" — into different categories to help determine who will qualify for Kuwaiti citizenship, Interior Minister Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Salem told the Arabic daily Al Seyassah.

"So by the end of 1996, we would have determined who is the actual hidoon and who belongs to other countries," Sheikh Ali said.

He added no more than two per cent of the 120,000 hidoon are expected to receive citizenship, this figure includes those hidoon married to Kuwaitis who will automatically receive Kuwaiti nationality.

The first category covers those who entered Kuwait legally years ago under another nationality which they are concealing, the minister said.

"We will completely resolve the problem of this category hy the end of this year. We will even announce their names," he said in the interview, also puhlished in Al Seyassah's sister paper Arah Times.

The second category includes those that claim to have refused naturalised Kuwaiti citizenship in the past, and are now demanding instead the status of original Kuwaiti citizens, he said.

"This is entirely untrue, because we have no official documents to prove they have refused the secondary (naturalised) citizenship," he said.

The third category includes those that entered Kuwait, have no official documents and are claiming to be hidoon, Sheikh Ali said, adding that the government had a solution for this group hut would not give details.

At the end of July, the interior ministry announced August deadlines for all the bidoon to register with the authorities and receive a temporary identity card as the first stage in resolving the decades-old problem.

Some of the hidoon come from families that have resided in Kuwait for several generations, while others are Arah economic migrants who were attracted to Kuwait hy the oil wealth generated since the 1950s.

Libya calls for a Security Council meeting on terrorism

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Libya requested Friday an urgent U.N. Security Council meeting on terrorism, calling it a "loathsome global phenomenon" and warning that Tripoli had had enough of U.S. efforts to make it a "scapegoat."

In a letter to the U.N. Security Council, Libya said accusations hy U.S. President Bill Clinton were groundless and aimed at seeking "a scapegoat for the inability of the United States administration to cope with mounting domestio terrorism."

On Friday, Mr. Clinton renewed his call for the international community to get tough on terrorism, citing a bill he is expected to sign Monday punishing foreign firms that invest in the oil sectors of Iran and Libya.

According to U.N. diplomats, the Security Council is unlikely to accede to the request for an emergency meeting. To do so, consensus among the 15 members is necessary and countries hostile to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's regime are not expected to agree.

Libya is supposed to bend to three resnlutions requiring it to hand over two suspects in the downing of a Pan Am flight over Lockerhie, Scotland in 1988 that caused 270 deaths.

According to the Security Council, Tripoli is also to cooperate fully with French officials investigating the destruction of a UTA DC-10 in Niger the following year, which killed 170 people.

Libya has been diplomatically active in the past few weeks, issuing letters and working in hopes of resolving the UTA/Pan Am affairs and convincing the United Nations to lift sanctions to which it is subject.

Tripoli is counting on countries like China, Russia, Egypt and Turkey to defend it before the Security Council. Currently, the United States does not have enough support within the Security Council to impose additional international sanctions on Libya.

Libya meanwhile announced the end of two weeks of air force exercises using live fire.

The official news agency JANA said the manoeuvres, in an unidentified area off the Lihyan coast, began July 12 and ended Friday.

Libyan Television has showed footage of the drill every night since it began, emphasising images of helicopters destroying fictional enemy targets.

The end of the exercises was marked Friday by a ceremony at an air base in which several pilots and technicians who took part in the manoeuvrers were "decorated for their excellent performance," the agency said.

The U.N. sanctions on Libya include an air and military embargo. Independent sources say the Libyan military has more than 400 combat aircraft, including the following models: MiG-21, MiG-23, MiG-25, Mirage 5D/DE, 5DD, F-1AD, SU-24 and SU-20.

In addition, the military has more than 45 Mi-24 and Mi-35 attack helicopters and 22,000 men in air defence.